Need–To–Know

Effective Communication for Environmental Groups

Proceedings of the 1987 Annual Joint Meeting
of the Public Advisory Committees
to the Environment Council of Alberta

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Additional copies of this publication may be obtained from:

Environment Council of Alberta
8th Floor Weber Centre
5555 Calgary Trail Southbound NW
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 5P9

Phone (403) 427-5792

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Introduction

We are an information society. That statement has been made so often that it is now trite. Probably few or none of us question that we are an information society. We should, however, question what this means, what good it does, and where we fit in. Information is of little value if it is not shared with those who need to know. This applies to policy makers if they are to make well-informed decisions, but, perhaps more important, it applies to all of us as we make day-to-day choices. Good communications are critical in everyday life at all levels.

How do we make sure that those who need to know receive information? It was this interest in the transmittal of information that led to the selection of communication as the theme for this year's Annual Joint Meeting.

Communication is essential to the effectiveness of the Public Advisory Committees. We have the satisfaction of improving our own knowledge. But there is little other value in the many hours we diligently spend as volunteers on projects such as the Alberta Conservation Strategy if we cannot convey our suggestions, for example, on protection of our environment while sustaining our economy, to the policy makers and to our constituent organizations.

The following presentations were delivered at our two-day annual conference. They were intended to stimulate thought and discussion as to how we might improve communications within our constituent organizations and how we might better transmit information to and from the Public Advisory Committees. It is our hope that by examining these important functions we will improve the overall effectiveness of the Public Advisory Committees as advocates of a healthy, sustainable environment in Alberta.

Fundamental to improving communication is an understanding of who we collectively are, as the Public Advisory Committees to the Environment Council of Alberta. In this regard, the conference started with an overview by Brian Free, a research officer with the Environment Council, using information compiled from a questionnaire sent to all member organizations. His presentation summarized who the member organizations are, where the Public Advisory Committee representatives come from, and how they presently communicate with their fellow members.

The keynote speaker, Susie Washington, emphasized the importance of communication as fundamental to power and effectiveness. She described how successful lobby groups mobilize their membership to increase their influence. Susie examined some environmental attitudes and trends, and gave some valuable insights on who the public listens to, trusts, and asks for help when an issue arises.

Session 2: Listening and Responding examined how organizations receive input from their members and incorporate these views into their operations. Dianne Pachal of the Alberta Wilderness Association described numerous ways to get the members' help in setting an organization's agenda. Some of these are informal and unsolicited, such as letters or phone calls to the executive or letters to the organization's newsletter. In other cases, formal input may be sought through questionnaires or member surveys.

This session attempted to answer a number of questions. Should ideas be member-initiated, or should members simply respond to executive-initiated ideas? What different types of processes do organizations use to get member input? How and when are they used? Are different approaches used in different circumstances? Are there formal mechanisms for handling unsolicited member views? If not, how are unsolicited views handled?

This session also examined formal public input processes such as public hearings, task forces, and legislative committees. Dave Buchwald, Director of Research, gave an overview of the Environment Council's public hearing process. Over the years, this has been a very successful process. Much of this success is attributed to the objectivity of the report and recommendations produced after each hearing, largely a result of the detailed brief analysis system used by the Council. Prior to this conference, details of the brief analysis system had not been publicly documented.

Session 3: Strengthening the Roots examined organizational structures and member involvement. Organizations must have the support of their members in promoting and publicizing ideas and activities. Dr. Trevor Slack and Dr. Bob Hinings discussed communication of ideas and motivation of members. Answers were sought for questions such as: Is it possible to get all, or even most, of the members committed to an organization's actions? Is it easier to involve members on short-term, crisis issues or on longer term policy issues? Do organizations look for member support and action or rely on other mechanisms to get the message out and get action?

The session concluded with a look at South Moresby, a very successful case study presented by Dr. Philip Dearden. His insights on how public support was mobilized first at a local, then provincial, and, finally, at the national and international levels, were interesting and useful to us all.

Session 4: Getting the Message Out dealt with a topic fundamental to the success of any initiative. Whether an organization uses all of its members or relies on its executive, there are several key groups it may target with information in order to win their support over the long or short term. The main groups may be the media, the politicians, the civil service, and the general public (or specific portions of this diverse group).

Speakers in this session examined the topic from the receiving end. What information is most important to them? How should it be presented to achieve maximum impact or results?

Numerous questions were posed to Linda Hughes of the *Edmonton Journal*, and Senator Herb Sparrow, who provided many useful insights. For example, how do we get the media interested in environmental issues? How important is the media to the success of environmental groups? How do we deal with the media — formally? Informally? How could the relationship between environmental groups and the media be improved? How should environmental information and issues be presented to the media and by the media? How do groups voice their concerns to the politicians? How can this be improved? What are the key elements of an issue that interest politicians? Are numbers important in the case of, for example, individuals writing letters, or is a strong organizational voice more important? Should politicians and organizations meet on a one-to-one basis on issues? Are there certain approaches that are more effective?

The civil service has considerable influence on government actions, both through their day-to-day input to the Minister and through their effectiveness in implementing government policy. Peter Lee of Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, Natural Areas Program, gave some interesting insights into how groups should communicate with civil servants to get their support for an organization's activities.

The final presentation of the conference was that of the Hon. Ken Kowalski, Minister of the Environment. The Minister underscored the importance of two-way communication to the functioning of government. He also provided insight into how politicians communicate their point of view and government policy to their constituents and what mechanisms they use to keep in touch with emerging issues.

The Minister also provided a detailed account of his priorities for the Department of Environment. With the passage of time, this will be a valuable benchmark against which to measure the success of communication between the Public Advisory Committees and the Minister of the Environment.

The conference will have been a success if we all gain not only the determination to improve the communications of our organizations, but also some thought-provoking ideas as to how we might accomplish this.

Session One

Getting Started

Communications and the Public Advisory Committees

Brian Free

Brian Free is a Research Officer with the Environment Council of Alberta.

The Environment Council proper is not a large organization by government standards. We currently have a staff of 20 individuals working in three divisions: administration, liaison, and research. Communications among the staff is not difficult — meetings can be called at short notice and co-workers are only a few steps away. There is a constant flow of paper around the office in the form of memos, newsletters, magazines articles, and so on. As well, the friendly atmosphere of the office is conducive to good communication.

Even in this favorable environment, communication doesn't just happen. It takes effort on everyone's behalf. There are still occasional slip-ups — staff sometimes forget to inform the receptionist if they are leaving the office to attend a meeting, or one of us may neglect to sign out a book that we have borrowed from our library, and it is always a book that someone else is soon looking for. Thankfully, I am never guilty of such transgressions. I guess my point is that even in a small organization, good communications requires effort. I'm sure you can all think of examples of minor communication failures in your own workplace or home.

The Environment Council is not just 20 people. Our advisory committees extend our organization to over 200 individuals who, in turn, represent thousands of Albertans. You are a very important part of the ECA. You provide the ECA with a network of concerned citizens, bringing environmental issues and concerns of Albertans to the government's attention. Much of our advice to government is based on input from you, the advisory committees.

Last spring, the decision was made to re-examine communications at the ECA and to develop a communications strategy. A small amount of navel-gazing suggested that our best resource, the advisory committees, posed the greatest challenge for effective communication. Just think of it: around 200 individuals from all over the province, from all types of backgrounds, meeting in small groups for a couple of hours about six times per year. A great deal of effort is expended in preparing for these important meetings and mountains of paper are mailed out to keep you abreast of the activities of your Council. Are we communicating effectively? It was decided we must learn more about our advisory committee members and seek suggestions from you on improving communications at the ECA. Hence, the questionnaire.

The Questionnaire

Most of you will remember the questionnaire that was sent out last June. It featured your name and address, as shown by our records, your affiliation, if any, and the advisory committee on which you sit. That was about the extent of our knowledge about you. We then asked about your personal interests, other environmental organizations to which you belong, fluency in other languages, and other details.

For the affiliated members of the Public Advisory Committee, we also sought information about the organization you represent. Our own records about our constituent organizations were rather thin and this certainly helped to bring us up to date on mailing addresses, newsletters, and so on.

The final section of the questionnaire went beyond the housekeeping of our own records. It was the most important section — communications. The questions dealt with communications from the ECA to your constituent organizations and from your organizations to the ECA as well as communications among your organizations. And your responses contained some very enlightening and useful comments and suggestions, some of which I will touch upon today.

Response to the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent out to all members of the advisory committees, including the Public Advisory Committee (PAC), the Science Advisory Committee (SAC), and and the Environmental Education Advisory Committee (EEAC). Some of the questions were not entirely appropriate for all of you. For example, SAC, EEAC, and unaffiliated PAC members do not sit as representatives of organizations and yet several questions focussed on communicating with constituent organizations. We felt, however, that all advisory committee members would have insights into communication with organizations and the operation of the advisory committees themselves and we didn't want to exclude that input.

Of the 176 questionnaires that were sent out last June, 115 were returned, a response rate of 65 percent. This is a substantial sample of our membership, although more feedback would have been welcomed. I want to thank all of you who took the time and effort to fill these out and send them in. You obviously put a lot of thought into your answers and they are being carefully considered. I also want to thank Pam MacKechnie of the ECA staff, who followed up our mailout with some gentle reminders over the phone, and Elaine Kaiser, who typed most of the information into our computer. This greatly assisted in my analysis.

Overview of Advisory Committee Membership

What sort of information did we receive? Without being too presumptuous, I hope, let me first give you an overview of you, the members of our advisory committees.

An examination of your mailing addresses reveals that almost half of you are from the Edmonton area. I arbitrarily defined the Edmonton area members as those living in Edmonton or within a 50 kilometer or 30 mile radius of the city. Eighty members, or about 45 percent, live in the Edmonton area. Forty-two members or 24 percent live in the Calgary area, which is similarly defined. Of the rest of the membership, 17 members are from northern Alberta, 22 members are from central Alberta, and 16 members are from southern Alberta.

Figure 1. Residence of Advisory Committee Members

Region	*Number of Members*
Edmonton Area	80
Calgary Area	42
North	17
Central	22
South	16
Total	177

What does this mean? Well, certainly the Edmonton area has more representation than one might expect from a random sample. However, our advisory committees are not a random sample. Many of your organizations are based in Edmonton and purposely select Edmonton-area members to represent them. This has practical advantages, considering the travel involved in attending ECA meetings, and certainly reduces the financial burden to the ECA. As well, a large number of SAC members are from Edmonton, where the largest university and several colleges and research facilities are located.

Looking at the membership from another perspective, 138 or 78 percent of our members are "city dwellers," cities having populations greater than 10,000. There are 16 such cities in Alberta. Seventy-eight percent may seem a large percentage, but it is virtually identical to the current proportion of Albertans who live in cities — 76 percent. This may be a happy coincidence, but I think it does suggest that our membership is not too far off the mark in representing a cross-section of Alberta's urban and rural population.

Personal Interests

Another area of questioning dealt with personal interests. Having this information will be useful if we are looking for people to comment on a particular report or issue or are looking for ideas for workshops, and so on.

Some people expressed their interests in key words, such as "energy" or "agriculture." Others explained their interests in paragraph form. For the purpose of my analysis, I summarized these latter responses using key words. A total of 41 key words were included.

Figure 2. Top Ten Personal Interests of Advisory Committee Members

1)	Pollution	45
2)	Public Education	39
3)	Wildlife	36
4)	Parks	20
5)	Environment	15
6)	Conservation	14
7-8)	Agriculture / Resource Management	10
9-10)	Land Use / Environmental Protection	9

I didn't find any surprises in this list. The Pollution Sub-Committee is the largest sub-committee and pollution issues have frequently appeared on PAC agendas. Education or public awareness was also rated high in the questionnaire. This underlines the importance of communication for the Environment Council and reflects well on the organizing committee of the annual joint meeting for selecting communication as this year's theme.

Membership in Environmental Organizations

We also asked about membership in other organizations. Are you join-up junkies? About half (53 percent) belong to more than one organization and one member listed as many as 11. However, a substantial number (42 percent) belong to just one environmental organization and six of the respondents did not indicate affiliation with any environmental organization.

Membership in an organization is not a prerequisite for sitting on our advisory committees. You still provide valuable input to the activities of these committees. However, the greatest potential for extended communication is through the affiliated members of PAC. It is through their organizations that the Public Advisory Committee can bring forward the concerns of thousands of Albertans. It is through these organizations that we in turn can speak to those Albertans.

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Overview of PAC Organizations

So, what did we learn about the organizations represented on PAC? We received information about 81 of our member organizations through the questionnaire, although you will see in the report of the Membership Committee that there are now 130 organizations on PAC. Of those organizations for which we have information, most have memberships ranging in size from 100 to 500, with several groups having more than 10,000. About two-thirds indicated that they held regular meetings and 63 percent listed newsletters.

We will supplement our records with information from other sources, such as the recently published directory of Alberta's environmental groups produced by the Alberta Environmental Network. You can still provide us with more information about your organizations. For example, in this year's evaluation form for the Annual Joint Meeting, we ask you to check our list to see if your organization's newsletter is included.

A list of the organizations will appear in the ECA Annual Report. A general breakdown of member organizations is as follows:

Figure 3. General Classification of Organizations Represented on PAC

25	Natural History or Outdoor Recreation groups
19	Social or Community Groups
19	Business or Industry
19	Education
17	Local Government
12	Agriculture organizations
10	Professions or Research Institutions
9	Health organizations

130	Total

These are fairly arbitrary assignments. Nevertheless, you can see that PAC includes quite a variety of types of organizations. This is one of your strengths. It underlines the fact that it is not just the so-called "environmentalists" who have concerns about our environment, but industry, agriculture, community groups, and the citizenry in general.

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Members were also asked for the areas of interest for their organization. Education topped the list, followed by pollution, parks, and environment. These priorities are similar to those expressed by the individual members.

Operation of the Advisory Committees

Now let me briefly discuss another section of the questionnaire. The last section sought suggestions about several aspects of how the advisory committees are operated. There were many well-considered suggestions about how meetings are run, output from PAC, the Annual Joint Meeting, and so on. Many of you complimented various aspects of the current operation. On behalf of the staff, I thank you for your positive remarks.

We were somewhat surprised at the large number of comments and suggestions about the orientation of new members. This has caused us to reconsider how we currently introduce new members to the world of the Public Advisory Committees. Many of your suggested improvements are already being done and so apparently they are not working. Our information package for new members is, I believe, quite thorough, but it is apparently missing the mark. It may be difficult to translate into the written word a sense of what the Environment Council is all about. Some respondents suggested one-on-one orientation for new members with either Archie Landals or a member of their sub-committees. Several members recommended an annual orientation meeting for all new members, either associated with the AJM or at some other time of year. We are seriously considering this latter suggestion and plan to hold annual orientation sessions in the future. We are also considering adjusting all of your appointments to a uniform date, such as January 1. This would not preclude members from coming on stream in May or October, but the majority of appointments and reappointments could be made at this time. An orientation session could be held in conjunction with the AJM or early in the new year. These plans have not been finalized.

Comments about the sub-committee meetings were generally favorable. Members appreciate as much advance notice of the agenda as possible and the minutes have been well received. Some members would like to see the meetings more tightly run, and suggest special training for the chairpersons. We have done this in the past and the ECA staff is certainly willing to provide assistance to sub-committee chairpersons. However, with a volunteer organization like PAC, all members have a responsibility to help the meetings along and I don't think we want to get too authoritarian. Several respondents did note an improvement in how the sub-committees functioned this year.

Communications

Finally, I will address the third section of the questionnaire, and probably the most important one, in which we examined communications from three perspectives:

1) Communication from the ECA to the organizations represented on PAC
2) Communication from the organizations to the ECA
3) Communication among the organizations represented on PAC

Figure 4. Communication Patterns

ECA → PAC organizations
PAC organizations → ECA
Among PAC organizations

How does the ECA communicate to member organizations? The obvious answer is through the PAC members. And this was rated as one of the preferred methods in your responses to the questionnaire. Most of the respondents report ECA activities to their respective organizations on a regular basis, be it annually, monthly, or other. Often this occurs at meetings of the membership or executive. Others contact their executive members if an issue of interest to the organization is discussed by PAC. Some members submit written reports, but the majority of communication is oral and informal. Many respondents indicated that they use prepared ECA material, for example forwarding copies of minutes or news releases to their executive. Some contribute information about ECA activities to their organization's newsletter.

My general impression is that the majority of PAC members do report back to their organizations, albeit infrequently. A need for improvement is evident, especially in providing appropriate material to the PAC members. Several of you suggested that summaries of issues that PAC is dealing with would be useful as well as profiles of member organizations. The most popular suggestion for improving communications from the ECA to your organizations was through items for your organization's newsletters.

We intend to respond to these suggestions by modifying and improving *PAC NOTES*, the ECA newsletter. *PAC NOTES* did receive a number of compliments and we would like to build on its success. This does not necessarily mean that we will make it longer. Its one-page format and "readability" are well appreciated. We do, however, intend to improve its content and adapt it for a wider audience. Short articles that are well suited for inclusion in other newsletters will be featured. We plan to produce *PAC NOTES* on a more regular basis and distribute it to newsletter editors in addition to its current mailout.

We are also prepared to assist PAC members who would like to prepare their own article for their organization's newsletter. This could include typing, editing, and other assistance as needed. Please keep this in mind if you have an opportunity to prepare written material for your organization.

Now let us reverse the flow of information — from your organizations to the ECA. Again the obvious method — through the PAC representative — was cited by most respondents. Occasionally a letter is sent directly to the ECA and I know that Alistair and Archie periodically receive phone calls from PAC members or executive members of PAC organizations. One mention was made of briefs presented to ECA public hearings, although I think many more of your organizations use this important method of bringing issues to the attention of the ECA. Perhaps it is noteworthy that about 10 percent of the respondents indicated that there is little or no communication from their organization to the ECA. The ECA is limited as to what it can do to encourage this flow of information. Some of the initiative to ensure that issues from your organization are considered by PAC must come from you, the PAC members.

The most popular suggestion for improving communication from PAC organizations to the ECA was to invite other members from your organization to attend PAC meetings. We would certainly welcome this, although the ECA would not be able to pay for their expenses. The ECA's policy is clear: PAC meetings are open to the public. Sometimes popular speakers or controversial topics will attract PAC members from other sub-committees, members of the general public, and, of course, the media. This is encouraging and many of you suggested that the Public Advisory Committee should continue to use news releases and hold news conferences to publicize important issues and increase PAC's public profile.

The final area of communication addressed in the June questionnaire was communication among member groups. My general impression from your responses is that this should not be a priority for the ECA. Other means of communications among environmental groups were mentioned — the Alberta Environmental Network was established for this very purpose. Newsletters can be exchanged among organizations as well. For the ECA's part, the most popular suggestion was to include write-ups on member organizations in an ECA newsletter. As I mentioned earlier, we hope to include such material in future editions of *PAC NOTES*.

I hope that Environment Council meetings such as this Annual Joint Meeting, and the many monthly meetings of the PAC sub-committees, serve to enhance communications among our member organizations. A great deal of understanding can result from this regular contact with other Albertans, who may represent a very different perspective than your own, but who still have concerns about our environment. Even if the main agenda items for a meeting might not interest you directly, it is likely of great interest to someone in the sub-committee, and this provides a real opportunity to better understand another's point of view. I know that I sometimes learn more if I am unfamiliar or even uninterested in a topic than if my pet peeve is the subject of discussion.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I feel that this questionnaire was a success and will help us to improve our communications. Although we didn't hear from all of you, I believe we did get a substantial cross-section of opinion. It allowed us to update our records and better understand the nature of our advisory committee membership. We were very impressed by the number and quality of your suggestions. We will continue to go over your suggestions, consider alternatives, and implement changes to improve the functioning of our advisory committees. These will not be sweeping changes, but more likely just doing lots of little things better. For example, as a result of your suggestions, we will be increasing our use of newsletters to reach a wider audience and will take steps to improve the orientation of new members.

After this glowing report, do you expect a flood of questionnaires from the ECA? Well, don't. Although we are pleased with the results of this survey, we don't see the "Questionnaire" as the panacea for improved communication. We will use questionnaires in the future as the need arises. For example, I'll take this opportunity to remind everyone to fill in your evaluation form at the end of this meeting. There is an opportunity to provide further comments about communications and the advisory committees. We are also asking you to write a couple of sentences for your mini-biography. It is better that you do it than anyone else. This was another suggestion you made that will help to acquaint new members with their sub-committee colleagues.

The evaluation form will be the last questionnaire we will ask you to fill out — for a while. There are better ways to facilitate communications at the ECA: effective dialogue at sub-committee meetings, more interaction between staff and PAC members, and presentations at our public hearings. The development of the Alberta Conservation Strategy continues to provide an excellent opportunity for us to involve many people and organizations in a common activity. During the rest of this Annual Joint Meeting, we will be exposed to a variety of ideas about communication. I hope that we will be able to apply some of the principles we learn over the next day and a half to further improve the effectiveness of the advisory committees. Collectively, we can make the ECA and its advisory committees a more effective organization. Thank you.

Environmental Protection is More than Good Ethics: It's Part of the Job

Susie Washington

Susie Washington is President of WEST (Western Environmental and Social Trends) in Calgary. WEST assists private and public sector clients in developing strategies for participation in environmental issue identification, resource management, and stakeholder relations.

This past year, there have been several documentaries on TV that discussed the interesting and turbulent times of the 1960s. To me, the most important message that came out of looking back 20 years was what many of the individuals who were interviewed said, notably: don't be misled by the fact that we have cut our hair and have changed the clothes we wear... the vision is still alive. We are just more successful in beginning to implement the changes.

My thesis for this presentation is that these changes — while they occur in all aspects of the Canadian social fabric — have directly affected the environmental field. Thus, the task before us is to learn how to manage this resurgence of social change in project planning and policy development.

With respect to concerns for the environment, these issues have risen in the eighties to a prominent spot on Canada's public agenda. The nascent concerns of the 1960s and 1970s, which, with rare exceptions, were held and expressed by individuals or small groups, have mushroomed. Today, concern for our environment has become a compelling part of Canada's value system. The extent of the public's environmental concern is borne out by a recent Decima poll (summer of 1987). When asked what comes to mind when thinking about the environment, eight out of ten people identified an environmental problem, not a positive aspect of the environment.

When asked, who do you find believable when it comes to issues involving the environment, health, and safety; who are you most likely to believe when they provide information; respondents answered:

Government - 23%

Industry - 8%

Environmental and Consumer Interest Groups - 69%

The Decima presentation has shown that the Canadian public has some serious dissatisfaction with the credibility and performance of both corporate and government sectors in Canada today, although the extent of the mistrust is perhaps surprising. As important as this mistrust, is the fact that environmental protection, as understood by Canadians, is now a leading social issue. It is evident in health and safety concerns at the local level, acid rain initiatives at the national level, and even expresses itself at the international level, where debt reduction assistance to developing countries is often conditional on protection of significant natural areas in the recipient country.

In Canada, in other words, the debate is no longer one of whether we should protect the environment, but how we do it.

In Canada, in other words, the debate is no longer one of whether we should protect the environment, but how we do it. These issues that command our attention today are more subtle and complex. Their resolution calls for critical analysis of prevailing approaches to policy setting and of existing management practices for resource development and use.

Moreover, Canadians are sending out a clear message — people are no longer prepared to take the word of an "expert;" they want to see the proof themselves, or they want to get it from a source they consider to be credible. Advocacy groups such as those concerned with the environment (I note that in the latest publication from the Alberta Environmental Network there are over 120 groups here in Alberta concerned with environmental issues) have become today's authorities on issues of concern to the public.

In my work with advocacy groups over the years, I have seen a great many changes take place in the strategies followed by many of the groups. This change is away from the confrontational style of the past (I would maintain confrontation was used to wake up the larger public — much like what happened in the sixties) toward a more co-operative approach based on facts rather than rhetoric. Furthermore, groups are willing to put in the time required to learn about the issues and to develop alternative solutions with management.

Along with the change in the public interest sector, there has been a similar change in industry. With the work of the IUCN, the Brundtland Commission on sustainable development, and Canada's home-grown Task Force on Environment and Economy, many industry leaders (and government leaders) have come to realize that it is neither productive nor appropriate to think of resource development and environment as necessarily conflicting. Sustainable development is a process that unites both activities. The challenge is to develop a system of management planning that will integrate actions aimed at environmental sustainability into resource decisions and activities, and include active input by the public — a tall order.

There are, however, a number of important steps that all parties can follow to establish better working relations. These will come as no surprise to many of you, but I want to talk about them briefly.

Strong Emotions

Impacted parties in an environmental dispute often feel angry, hurt, fearful, or resigned to a project or policy. For meaningful discussion to occur, these negative emotions must be recognized and in turn managed, internally among groups or organizations as well as in any negotiation process. In analyzing disputes, I have seen what I call "cumulative feelings," that is, parties in conflict who have unusually strong feelings that may not be merited by the actual situation, but which have escalated over time and often block innovative problem solving.

On the other hand, there are situations that do produce very negative feelings and are the direct result of conditions that do cause conflict. Obviously, yelling or direct insults usually result in negative emotions. How parties, including advocacy groups, manage these intense feelings frequently has direct effects on, and can be highly destructive to, negotiations. My point here is, no matter which side of the fence we may be on, on a specific issue, we all have a responsibility to manage our emotions. Telling somebody off may make you feel better for the moment — revenge — but it may compound the problem and make it impossible to resolve because of mistrust and bad feelings.

Misperceptions or Stereotypes

We all suffer from these. I think it is important to assess ourselves and those that we work with. Again, from my experience at Banff and now in a consulting practice, parties in a dispute frequently have misperceptions because they use different language. Thus, it becomes extremely important to take the time to define the terms you use. Evaluation of science — for example, what something means — is one of those areas that frequently leads to misperceptions. The point here is, restate or reframe your message in another way to assist communication among all parties.

Legitimacy

This refers to parties accepting an opponent's point of view, issues, or interests, or even their emotions. In other words, accept them as genuine and making sense. For example, negotiations often break down because one party fails to perceive the other as a legitimate spokesperson. The classic case is environmental groups frequently not being perceived to be legitimate spokespersons with respect to issues of public concern. Unfortunately, we have all seen examples where government officials or industry representatives try to discredit opponents and vice versa. From many perspectives, this is a no-win game for all parties and obscures the real issues in debate.

Another area that continues to be a problem is the legitimacy of a person. A tactic frequently used by all sides is to question the right, the knowledge, or the individual ethics or underlying interests of opponents — in other words, discrediting people who disagree with your position. Again, this is a no-win game and focuses the debate on personalities rather than substance. The media may love this type of cat fight — I call it the *National Enquirer* style of journalism — but it obscures the real issues and so easily can destroy productive dialogue.

Other issues of legitimacy focus on procedures. Frequently one side or another has problems with procedures. Acceptable procedures, be they scientific evaluations or process questions, are important to resolution of resource disputes. I think it is important that all parties pay attention to the rules of the game before they play it. In the best of possible worlds, procedures should be designed to establish the facts for all parties to use.

Once emotions are acknowledged and accepted, parties can move on to the substantive issues.

Finally, emotions are acceptable in environmental disputes. It's important for us to remember that, as individuals, we do have emotions. That doesn't mean you have to agree with the other side's point of view to accept that they have strongly held views. But, I believe that once emotions are acknowledged and accepted, parties can move on to the substantive issues. In my experience, this perceptual change is often crucial to the beginning of productive problem solving.

In conclusion, whatever view you may have of a particular issue, we as individuals and as groups do influence public and corporate policy. Canadians are not standing back and waiting for it to happen. Business and government can no longer assume that the views and initiatives of interested parties (stakeholders) can be dealt with as externalities to the strategic planning and management processes. That view is no longer viable in today's social and business environment. The difficulty, of course, is learning how to manage that input and to use conflict constructively.

Questions

Q. You made a couple of statements. One was that your surveys indicated that people tend not to believe the industries, they don't believe the government officials. Then, at the end, you concluded that people are listening, or the governments are listening, and we are included in that. But to some extent that is a quantum leap in my mind. What evidence do you have that the public cares? It's easy for interest groups, as represented here, to get involved, but when we talk about the corporate public.... Although they may not believe, I don't see a lot of evidence that people care to the point that they're going to start writing letters or that they're going to complain about the broad issues that don't affect them. Do you have any information or results that suggest, yes, they do care to those extents?

A. If I understand your question, you're asking whether or not the larger public cares about the environment enough to do something. I think that there is evidence to suggest that is the case. [The Decima survey] very clearly indicated that those people who tend to be involved in issues of any social concern are a relatively small group of people, but that the larger group or constituency of the Canadian public look to us social activists to sort of carry the torch, if you will. That doesn't mean that they won't circulate petitions and it doesn't mean that they won't participate in, say, a consumer boycott. And it doesn't mean that they'll do some other things. What it may mean is that they aren't willing to get into the nitty gritty of actually sustaining a group and its activity. I think that's a fundamental difference.

Q. I've watched from a slightly different perspective. It's an enormous and very heartening growth in collaborative, consultative types of things over the last 10 years. One thing worries me now, that occurred to me a few years ago and is starting to be a concern. I wonder if you would comment on it. The more people-type processes you have going, the less willing most people are to believe that there are issues where there is *not* a compromise. There are a few issues that are simply yes or no. The existence of all this consultation, I think, is creating an environment where some people believe that there simply are no situations where we can't satisfy everyone.

A. I concur with you to a certain extent. In some situations, I think that there are no solutions that will, and I will qualify and say at least partially, satisfy all the parties, because I don't believe that everyone is going to be satisfied all the time. But if we can work to have more of us satisfied about more of the issues, then I think that's where we should be. That's my realistic expectation.

I do think that there are some issues where communities are saying, the buck stops here: if you want to put a sour gas plant in my community, fine, but do it with full sulphur recovery. Now that's sort of a non-negotiable issue. But you can design some processes so that, at least, everybody walks away from the table not angry at each other, but better understanding the other side's point of view. I don't pretend to think that we can collaboratively solve all the environmental problems. I think we can learn to work together better. That's different, and that's what I'm talking about.

There are some non-negotiable issues out there, believe me. But if we win on the ones that we can solve together, then at least we've got a bank of good will, so that we can begin to talk with each other more effectively about those crunchy ones, the ones that are much more difficult to solve.

Q. I was interested in one remark you made, that there is a general public that is skeptical of the opinions of so-called experts. Seems to me that there is somewhere between the area of accepting 100 percent everything experts give us and the other extreme of spending all our time questioning and taking it for granted that everything experts say is wrong. I'm just wondering where a responsible group fits into this. I suggest that the so-called experts, that is, people who are trained and who study and who are knowledgeable in a field are right probably about 98 percent of the time. But because they are sometimes wrong, somebody has to question them. But, for a group such as ours, what should the emphasis be? It can't be, I don't think, the credibility, continually questioning everything that knowledgeable people have told us, and on the other hand, it can't be 100 percent accepting everything they've told us.

A. I don't really have answers on that. I do think, however, that there has been a tendency to, and I certainly don't want to point fingers, but to set policy, standards, regulations in the government sector, and set sort of environmental standards and approaches to projects in the industry sector, in camera, behind closed doors. I don't mean to suggest that there's something sneaky going on necessarily. In fact, I think in most instances it's done with the best of intentions. But people today are saying, hey, I want to know why you did this. I want to know what your criteria are for establishing these standards, why you've chosen x parts per million or billion or whatever. Give me some information that is understandable to me so that I can make my own decisions. I think what people are saying is, we're not necessarily saying it's wrong, we just want to know why. And we'd like to have some input into that as well.

Q. It sounds to me like you'd be in favor of environmental mediation. What do we do to get, for instance, an environmental mediation society established in Alberta?

A. Well, I'm not certain that establishing a society is necessarily the way to go, but I do think that there a number of individuals around the province who are practising, in one way or another, various forms of what I call collaborative or co-operative kinds of problem solving. Mediation is one technique with that, and certainly I've been an advocate of it for years.

I don't think, in Canada, given the way we make decisions, particularly about environment and resource development or resource use, that we have a hope in hell of mediation the way it is conceived in the United States. I think if we are to institute mediation or other forms of collaborative problem solving, it has to be within the framework of how we review projects or how we set policy. It needs to be up front in the process rather than, as in the U.S. scenario, later on, when the proverbial you-know-what hits the fan.

Certainly the ERCB has played around with it. I think they've had some successes and they've had some notable failures. There are some very important reasons why they had failures. I think they are only just now coming to terms with what those reasons are.

In the area of policy setting, there is room for more collaborative problem solving. I'd like to think that some of the government agencies that are responsible for resource and environmental policy recognize this as well, and are working to begin to open up their decision-making processes to allow for that. A positive example is what Alberta Environment has done with having people outside of government review legislation with respect to clean air. That is the more collaborative way of looking at legislation. It may not be mediation. So I think it is sort of popping up despite [not] setting up some sort of formal structure. I certainly see that as the way of the future. It's not the answer for everything, by the way.

Q. To go back to the previous question regarding experts and scientists: I have found that during my years of involvement in the public hearing process, you always could find an expert who said yea, and you always could find an expert who said nay. Now for us, as public who go to the hearings and present our point of view and rely on expert opinion in some cases, we were always told, yes, well, this doctor says completely the opposite. Now how can the public then form an opinion, and who do we believe?

A. Well, in fact, I think that's why people are no longer trusting experts. Science is science — you can always get someone to argue one side and argue the other, and usually the results are so tenuous that it's very hard to derive a clear opinion. It's only rarely that you ever hear somebody, a scientist of one sort or another, come out and say, this is a definitive statement. That's just not the nature of the beast. And I think that is why people are saying, hey, I don't necessarily trust you. I want to know for myself so I can make my own judgement call on that, or me and my friends will be able to do that, or at least have access to the information so that we can make an intelligent decision.

Q. I'd like to comment on what Joanne was talking about — mediation. You mentioned in your talk about managing emotions, managing conflict, and so forth. I'd like to get some specifics as to what that means in managing the day-to-day process. If we don't use mediation, what are we relying on?

A. Well, actually I think Environment Canada has a rather interesting approach, which is not mediation, and they call it consultation. It's a rather expensive way of doing things, but I think it works. That is, they go out and they get a whole range of views from a whole set of different people across the country. They come back, they massage it into place, and they throw it back out again in a sort of round table. I think policy dialogue works. You lock a bunch of people in a room for a period of time. You say, here are the parameters of a particular topic. Where are there grounds for consensus? Where are there areas of divergence? And people can work through a structured framework to be able to solve that. Mediation is only just a tool.

Direct negotiation is another tool. I don't think that you need an outside party, necessarily, to resolve disputes. I'd like to think that people can sit down between themselves and talk things out. In fact, in the best of possible worlds, if company x wants to put a sour gas plant or power line next to my property, I would hope that they would come out and talk to me early, before they've got their plan in place, so that we can begin to jointly decide what best approach we can come to.

Q. The bottom line, then, is that you have to have a neutral chairman?

A. Not necessarily. No, I'm not saying that at all. Mediation is the use of a neutral person. But I would like to think that [there could be] direct negotiation between interested parties, be they an industry proponent or a government agency, and directly affected and interested parties, at the table. You don't need a Susie Washington, believe me. It's nice and, if you want to pay my salary, I'd love it. But I believe that we all have the capability within us to negotiate. The things I was trying to outline are generic. It doesn't matter whether it's dialogue, a forum like this, a mediation, or direct negotiation. These are generic issues, ones that we all need to carry in our little bag of tricks.

Q. I was interested in your comment with regard to sustainable development. In February, 1985, the First Ministers held a conference. They published a three- or four-page document wherein they supposedly discussed the sustainable concept, but it came out, as I remember reading it, as sustainable economics. Now, we probably all have a common meaning for sustainable development with regard to resources. You mentioned the difficulty that sometimes occurs because people have different meanings for the same term. Could you, from your experience, give us any enlightenment on how this concept of sustainable development might be being misinterpreted by some of the different sectors of society, for whatever reason?

A. Well, I can't comment on that. But I will say that the Environment and Economy Task Force, I know, spent quite a bit of time discussing the term "sustainable development" — whether it should be sustainable development or sustainable economic development. If you have a copy of the green book — and I would suspect that most of you in this room have had several come your way through the mail — they spoke directly to the term "sustainable development." The definition they drew from was the one that the IUCN has used and they certainly have given it wide distribution. I don't have the green book with me, but to my way of thinking that's probably the most operative definition around today. All the CCREM ministers bought into that green book and presumably the definition contained therein, and the industry leaders who sat on the Task Force as well also bought into that. So I think it is a commonly held definition. I meant to bring it, because I figured something like this would happen, and I didn't. But if you refer to the green book, I think that that's probably going to be the definition.

I will also say that the IUCN, which has really given birth to the notion of sustainable development, has realized that the existing definition didn't take into account what I call the "human" element. Just this year they have a working conference to redraft the whole concept of sustainable development, and the whole human element, the values and the right to a healthy environment and all that kind of stuff, will be written into it.

Q. I think there are copies of that report available.

A. Okay, well, if you don't have it I would encourage you all to look at how they define sustainable development. I think, if nothing else, that type of task force represented a microcosm of the kind of debate that you were talking about, and they came out on sustainable development.

Q. When industry actually comes out and admits that they have polluted, and I think that's essentially the fact of it, well, that's marvellous from where I stand. We can go anywhere once they just admit it.

A. I think that they will carry that on, but I like to think anyway that most industry people have come to realize that it is good business now to protect the environment.

Q. I'd just like to elaborate a little bit on the question of the definition of terms. I came up with a surprising example at our forest land use get-together that I found startling. For example, you have to watch out for other people's interpretation of common terms for things we all know, for instance, multiple use. I'm sure we all know what multiple use is, specifically in relation to land use, forest use, and so on. It's specific, obviously. I'm startled to find that the fellows who want to be referred to as forest managers at that seminar regarded any use that excluded forest harvest as being a single use. So wildlife management, watershed management issues, anything you want to name, became one of the various single uses. You have to watch out for these things.

Another question is — and I don't expect a definitive answer — how do you keep people in a discussion from using buzz words that change the rational discussion into an emotional mess because of other people's reaction to those buzz words? If you were talking politics, I would use the examples of socialist, communist, capitalist, and all those terms. But all of our groups have words that are sometimes applied to us that may set us off. "Environmentalist" tends to be one of them. Thank you.

A. Well, I think that that's a good point. That really brings me back to the beginning, to those little commandments that I was talking about. I think that we need to look at ourselves before we go out and talk to somebody else. We all have our little bag of buzz words that we carry and have pejorative terms that we use to describe somebody who has the temerity to disagree with us. What I'm suggesting is sort of practise what you preach first. When you are in a situation and buzz words are used, take the time to stop discussion and deal with it rather than wait and have it escalate later. That's just my approach. You may have another one as well. Thank you.

Session Two

Listening and Responding

Seeking and Responding to Concerns of Individual Members

Dianne Pachal*

Dianne Pachal is Executive Director of the Alberta Wilderness Association.

For a volunteer-based public interest group to effectively seek and respond to the concerns of its individual members, those who run the organization (for example, executive and board of directors) must first be aware of

a) the importance of this to the organization

b) the reasons why individual members aren't heard from

c) the general make-up of the organization.

On an ongoing basis, this information would be used by the organization's decision-making core to decide on the methods that are most appropriate and productive for seeking and responding to the input of individual members.

An organization must make a conscious effort to ensure that those in charge understand the importance of seeking and responding to individual members' concerns. Without such an awareness, it is unlikely that the organization will allocate enough time and resources to keeping in touch with its membership. This is particularly a pitfall for larger organizations and/or those with a membership spread over a large geographic area.

So why is it important? It shouldn't be hard to see that the individual members collectively are the foundation of the organization. An enlightened and involved membership provides strength and long-term stability for the organization. Such a membership is also the pool of ideas, the interest, the dedication, and the source of action that sustains the organization and helps it to successfully meet its goals. This dynamic foundation is particularly important for environmental organizations, which typically are plagued by very meager finances and seemingly insurmountable issues and goals.

[The] membership is the pool of ideas, the interest, the dedication, and the source of action that sustains the organization and helps it to successfully meet its goals.

Seeking and responding to the concerns of members is also a moral responsibility, because organization representatives are seen as speaking for the membership by non-members and members alike. For environmental groups, this moral responsibility has an added dimension of importance.

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* Ms. Pachal was unable to attend the Annual Joint Meeting. This paper is the text of the presentation she had planned to make.

Public opinion surveys have revealed that the Canadian public at large gives more weight to and puts more trust in the comments and positions of environmental groups on environmental issues, than those of government and industry representatives. Representatives for environmental organizations had better be truly reflecting the positions and decisions of their collective membership. This is an important component of the public credibility these organizations have gained.

Understanding the basic reasons why an organization may not be hearing from its individual members is a fundamental step toward identifying and correcting the shortcomings. There are two basic groups of reasons:

a) reasons of choice on the part of the individual members

b) reasons of default.

Not all members may want the organization to solicit their concerns.

Not all members may want the organization to solicit their concerns. There are those who join an organization for such reasons as to support it financially, to add one more to the membership tally, to keep informed on issues, and/or to receive the basic membership services, such as the organization newsletter or periodical, or reduced rates at a bookshop or store, *but* they do not want to be directly involved. Reasons of choice include those such as not enough time and other commitments. Whatever the reason, the member's choice should be respected. It would be a waste of an organization's limited resources, especially if it is a large organization, to actively solicit the concerns of these members. For example, in a survey of its membership, the Alberta Wilderness Association found that only a third of its members joined in order to play an active role in wildland conservation. The other main reasons for joining were to keep informed on wildland conservation issues and to financially support the goals of wildland conservation. However, an organization should be careful not to close off all opportunities for this type of member to become actively involved should he/she choose to sometime in the future. This can generally be avoided by making sure this type of member still receives the main newsletter or periodical, and the current addresses and phone numbers for the organization.

The reasons of default generally include

a) members aren't aware that their opinions, ideas, and concerns are of value to the organization, and that these will be considered and responded to

b) they haven't been asked or given an opportunity

c) lack of knowledge on the particular matter

d) lack of an opinion on the particular matter.

Current information on the make-up of the organization is also basic and will be required if the organization is going to successfully overcome any of the above reasons of default. This includes information on

a) the size of the organization

b) the geographic areas covered by the membership

c) individual members' views on whether or not they want to be directly involved.

As the geographic area covered by an organization's membership increases and/or as the number of members increases, individual members become further removed from the actions and decision-making body of the organization. Increased effort is required to effectively seek and respond to the individual members' concerns. This increased effort will require both an increased allotment of resources and an increased sophistication in collecting and retrieving information about individual members.

As the geographic area covered by an organization's membership increases and/or as the number of members increases, individual members become further removed from the actions and decision-making body of the organization.

For example, when an issue related to the objectives of the organization arises, one of the major tools of a public interest group is to quickly get out to its members information on the issue, what it would like individual members to do, and what the organization is doing as a whole. However, the logistics and postal costs for sending this information to all members, and in time for them to take action, are often prohibitive for large public interest groups.

One of the basic methods for reducing the problems associated with seeking the input of individual members in a geographically and/or numerically large organization is through collecting and maintaining information on the individual members' views as to whether or not they wish to be involved and, if so, in what subject areas. Organizations can reduce the resources required by contacting only those who have identified that they generally want to provide input. For example, all members of the very large National Audubon Society receive the Society's periodical, but only those who have identified that they wish to be active on conservation matters receive the *Audubon Action* tabloid. Contact lists can be further sorted, if the matter is likely to be of interest only to a specific geographic area. Also, members can be contacted according to the subject areas they have identified as wanting to be kept in touch on.

With an understanding of the importance of seeking and responding to individual members' concerns, of the reasons why individual members aren't being heard from, and of the general make-up of the organization, that organization has the framework to design its own program for keeping in touch with its members' concerns.

An effective program begins with having a membership that is kept informed about the organization, and it is maintained by responding to the concerns of the individual members. An informed membership is one that is given information on the organization's objectives, and is kept up to date on the organization's priorities, policies, activities, and decisions.

There are a variety of methods an organization can choose from when designing its programs. These can generally be grouped into passive or active on the part of the organization. Below are some examples:

Passive

- New members' orientation (pamphlets)
- Easy-to-find address and phone number for the organization (for example, on wallet membership cards, publications, flyers or pamphlets, newsletters or periodicals)
- Listing of executive, board of directors, key representatives, and contacts (for example, contacts for particular subject area or project) sent to each member
- Time set aside at the organization's regular or special meetings (for example, slide programs, guest speakers) for members to raise concerns in general ("soap-box") and/or for one-on-one discussion with group leaders.
- Annual general meeting (members' "soap-box" session, "free time" or "social time" allotted in schedule to allow for one-on-one discussion with group leaders)
- Organization's newsletter/periodical (letters to editor section, space for "viewpoint" type articles from members)
- Information flyers, such as "action alert" or issue flyers

Active

- New members' orientation (phone individual members, new members' orientation meetings)
- Direct phoning
- Direct mailings — requesting response from members by phone, letter, or mail-in coupon
- Workshops, particularly for complex subjects, when setting new policy or setting overall priorities and strategies
- Questionnaires, by phone or mail

- Special meetings in addition to regularly scheduled meetings
- Newsletter/periodical items, or clip-out and mail-in coupons soliciting members' input
- Opportunity for formal resolutions (for example, at annual general meeting)

Seeking and responding to the concerns of members should include opportunities for the individual member to bring concerns to the decision-making core of the organization and to other members of the organization. Methods such as "soap-box" sessions at regular and special meetings, a letters to the editor section in newsletters and periodicals, formal resolutions, and workshops provide members with the latter type of opportunity.

The important thing is that there be a response.

The responses to concerns raised by individual members can vary from a phone call, letter, or meeting through to incorporation of the concern into the activities, policies, or objectives of the organization. The appropriate response logically depends on the nature and scope of the concern. The important thing is that there be a response and that the organization's volunteers and staff (if any) have the tools to aid them in responding to the concerns. Those answering the phone and opening the mail need to know the appropriate people in the organization to refer the concerns to.

When the individual members' concerns are actively solicited, particularly when developing new policy, setting priorities and objectives, or dealing with complex subjects, it is very important for the organization to follow through and let the members know the final outcome.

In summary, effectively seeking and responding to the concerns of individual members requires an understanding of the importance of doing this, and the conscious development of a program to ensure that it is being done. Such a program is tailored to meet the needs of the particular organization, with the knowledge of the size and geographic location of the organization's membership, and of the individual members' views on whether or not they want to be directly involved.

The Environment Council of Alberta

Dave Buchwald

Dave Buchwald is Director, Research, of the Environment Council of Alberta.

The Environment Council of Alberta (ECA) was established in 1977, as a continuation of the Environment Conservation Authority. This Crown corporation's prime role is to carry out an ongoing review of provincial environmental policies and programs. This is accomplished through three main routes:

1) support for the activities of the Public Advisory Committees
2) staff reports prepared by the Research Division
3) public hearings on major environmental matters.

Recently we have also been experimenting with a fourth method — use of a computerized bulletin board. We have been pleased with this technology so far, and hope to expand it to cover the entire province.

A theme that encompasses all of these activities is communication, which is also the theme of this Annual Joint Meeting. This provides an excellent opportunity to provide the members of the Public Advisory Committee with an overview of one of those communication activities: the public hearings, as they operate now and how they have evolved in the last decade.

There have been six public hearings in the last 10 years, or an average of about 20 months between hearings. The hearing topics have been:

The Environmental Effects of Forestry Operations in Alberta
Management of Water Resources Within the Oldman River Basin
The Management and Disposal of Hazardous Waste
Noise in Alberta
Maintaining and Expanding the Agricultural Land Base in Alberta
Recycling in Alberta

These hearings totalled 95 days or about 15 days for each hearing. Total attendance at all hearings was 4,568. About 25 percent of attendees submitted briefs (1,167 in all).

Public hearings are conducted by a panel, which is appointed by Cabinet. The Cabinet order (Order in Council) identifies the panel chairman and the members. The chief executive officer of the ECA, by statute, is the vice chairman. There is a new panel for each hearing, with the exception of the vice chairman, who provides continuity between hearings and who is responsible for day-to-day operations of the ECA. This means that panels can be specifically selected for their knowledge of or concerns about a particular hearing topic.

The ECA public hearing process consists of a series of steps:

1) receipt of terms of reference by Order in Council
2) preparation of background material
3) appointment of a hearing panel by Order in Council
4) a prehearing public information program
5) public hearings
6) post-hearing investigations
7) preparation of the Report and Recommendations
8) submission of the report to the Lieutenant Governor in Council and the Minister of Environment
9) public release of the report and a subsequent public awareness program.

The above steps are usually sequential, although there can be areas of overlap, particularly between receipt of the terms of reference and preparation of background materials.

Terms of Reference

In order to hold a public hearing, the ECA must first receive terms of reference through an Order in Council. That Order in Council may also identify the hearing panel. The forestry, Oldman, hazardous waste, and noise terms of reference all included panel appointments. This was not the case in agriculture and recycling, where panel appointments lagged behind the terms of reference by a little over a year.

Separation in time of the Orders in Council that establish terms of reference and panel appointments can be advantageous. Preparation of background materials for a public hearing is an ECA staff function and does not involve panel members. Hence, early receipt of terms of reference provides clear direction as to the hearing topic and allows time for preparation of background materials for public hearing participants.

Terms of reference usually identify a broad inquiry into the topic with attention being drawn to some particular aspects of the issue. They always conclude with a requirement to hold public hearings and to prepare a report for submission to the Lieutenant Governor in Council and to the Minister of Environment.

An important distinction needs to be made between the requirements to inquire into a matter and to hold a public hearing.

An important distinction needs to be made between the requirements to inquire into a matter and to hold a public hearing. The ECA interprets the inquiry requirement broadly, and taps all information sources. Information used in the preparation of a Report and Recommendations can come from staff investigations, meetings with government agencies and the private sector, conferences and workshops, and experience of panel members, as well as from the public hearings. The point here is that the public hearings are a mandatory and important source of information, but not the only source. Information from a variety of sources is integrated into the Report and Recommendations of the panel.

Panel members are members of the Environment Council, and their activities are directed by the Environment Council Act. An important part of this Act is the definition of natural resources (land, plant life, animal life, water, and air) and the description of matters pertaining to environment conservation. The drafters of the legislation should be congratulated for their foresight, as the descriptions cover all the normal "environmental" issues, in addition to economic factors, aesthetics, and relevant legislation. They have enabled the ECA historically to deal with aspects of environmental issues that have only recently been recommended in the report by the National Task Force on Environment and Economy, such as sustainability and the integration of economic development and environmental conservation.

Preparation of Background Information

The ECA usually prepares background information on a hearing topic for public distribution prior to public hearings. This is done for three reasons:

1) to provide information to those who may be considering whether or not to participate in the hearing. If they decide to participate, the background information can be used as a resource base.
2) to develop staff expertise on the subject to enable them to provide sound scientific assistance to the hearing panel.
3) to create information that will assist the public at large and the educational community in their task of identifying environmental issues for tomorrow's decision makers.

Considerable background material was prepared for the six hearings identified. Information has been presented in three formats: technical reports, summary reports, and brochures, each aimed at a different audience. These reports synthesize extensive bodies of research into an understandable form, and make complex information more accessible to the people of Alberta.

Technical reports examine a topic in detail, and usually include extensive documentation. They are primarily intended for the serious reviewer or the academic community. These reports are usually printed in a single color and can be several hundred pages in length.

Summary reports are short documents, perhaps 15 or 20 pages, and are often summaries of technical reports. The format is directed toward those with a general interest in the topic, but who are not prepared to invest the amount of time required to review the detailed technical reports. These are often printed on glossy paper and contain colored illustrations.

For the last six hearings, 65 documents were produced, consisting of 39 technical reports, 20 summary reports, and six brochures. The number of documents per hearing ranged from one for the Oldman hearings, where Alberta Environment provided many technical reports, to a high of 32 for the public hearings on the maintenance and expansion of the agricultural land base.

Some hearings have been in response to issues already on the public agenda, notably water management in the Oldman River basin, and hazardous wastes. In these circumstances, it is common for the lead agency to produce background documents for a number of purposes, including the hearing process. When this happens, the need for additional documents from the ECA is substantially reduced. Alberta Environment supervised the production of 16 reports relevant to the Oldman project and four relevant to hazardous wastes.

Although prehearing material is usually prepared directly by ECA staff, documents can also be prepared by other agencies or by consultants, to standards established by the ECA. For example, seven of the 32 reports in the agriculture series were done by other groups, including provincial and federal agencies and private consultants to them, as well as consultants to the ECA.

Several of the noise publications were written by the staff of Alberta Community and Occupational Health.

Several audiovisual presentations have been created for prehearing information programs. This was done for hazardous wastes, agriculture, and recycling. Whenever possible, the costs of these programs are shared with other agencies, but the material content must be of a standard acceptable to the ECA.

Hearing Panel Appointments

There has been a tendency in recent years to have larger hearing panels. The forestry, Oldman, hazardous wastes, and noise panels all consisted of four members (including the chief executive officer of the ECA). This was increased to five for both the agriculture and recycling hearings.

Panel members have come from many parts of society: the academic community, business, farming, forestry, and various aspects of urban development. Several of the 20 appointed panel members have continued to be active in environmental matters after their panel appointments were rescinded, through their contributions to the activities of the Public Advisory Committees.

Prehearing Public Information Programs

All ECA public hearings are preceded by an extensive information program. This program usually begins from two to 12 months before the public hearings commence. The program has three main objectives:

1) to ensure that the public is aware of the hearings, to provide information on the hearing topic, and to describe the hearing process to those who may be unfamiliar with ECA public hearings
2) to develop a mailing list so that interested persons can be informed as the public hearing process moves through its various stages
3) to evaluate interest in the topic to help in the selection of hearing locations.

The prehearing information program uses a number of techniques. These have included:

1) mailouts to the ECA general mailing list in order to determine who wishes to be placed on the list for the current hearing topic
2) meetings with the general public and interested organizations
3) appearances and interviews for the print and electronic media
4) press releases on interesting aspects of the background material or of the hearings
5) posters announcing hearing dates and locations
6) displays at various meetings, and in public places such as shopping malls
7) advertisements

8) showing of audiovisual materials on public service television channels.

The scale of the prehearing information program can be substantial. For example, 85 information meetings were held prior to the agriculture hearings and 65,104 background reports were distributed. Recycling was on a different scale, with 11 prehearing meetings and 12,701 background reports distributed.

Occasionally, with a long hearing, it may be necessary to overlap this part of the process with the hearing itself. For example, some hearings have been up to six months in duration. In these circumstances, the prehearing information campaign may be continuing in one part of the province while the hearings are progressing elsewhere.

The Public Hearings

The most important reason for holding a public hearing is to access the vast knowledge and experience that exists in the collective public mind. The ECA hearing process endeavors to capture that knowledge, analyze it, and integrate it into the Report and Recommendations prepared for Cabinet, the Minister of Environment, and the public.

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Some other important benefits are associated with the public hearing process.

Hearing attendees and participants usually sit through a number of presentations. Many have commented that this has enabled them to broaden their views and to obtain a better understanding of the issue being discussed. The general effect of someone with one point of view being exposed to opposing views is usually beneficial.

In order to participate in public hearings or to assist in the preparation of background materials, it is necessary for contributors to organize existing information in a presentable format. This sometimes leads to new perspectives and results in new approaches to the issue. By the time the hearing is finished, the problems or opportunities that were the subject of investigations may have already changed, usually for the better. This applies particularly to the procedures of some government departments, which, when a problem is publicly identified, changes its procedures to alleviate the problem. Other departments, of course, adopt defensive postures by developing more elaborate rationalizations for the continuation of the procedures identified as undesirable.

Information is usually presented to a hearing orally, supplemented by a written text. Occasionally, a participant will also provide extensive background reference material. This range of information is captured in three ways: verbatim transcripts of oral presentations, personal notes of the hearing panel, and a comprehensive brief analysis.

Verbatim Transcripts

Verbatim transcripts of public hearings are made by court reporters who are under contract to the ECA. Those transcripts are available to the panel in the preparation of the Report and Recommendations. They are also available to the public through the ECA library, and through ECA information centers, which are found in many parts of the province.

A complete set of hearing transcripts consists of many volumes. Depending upon how many presentations are made, there is normally one volume for each hearing date. Each volume contains an index of presenters.

Beginning with the recycling hearings, verbatim transcripts are available on computer disk. This allows searching for information using keywords, using the program of choice.

Personal Notes

Personal notes are just that, personal notes of panel members, which may provide specific insight on the presentations received.

Brief Analysis

During the past decade, the ECA has developed a comprehensive system for analyzing the content of information presented to the hearing panel. The objective is to create a database of all oral and written information that can be used during the preparation of the Report and Recommendations.

As with many processes, this one has evolved through many phases. It began by identifying 20 to 30 major subject areas for a hearing topic. Research officers made notes during the hearings and slotted each note under the various headings. These comments were sorted manually, put on a dictaphone, and typed for use by the team writing the Report and Recommendations. Reports from the Conservation Authority often included a synopsis of hearing commentary, but the use of specific references was not common.

This approach continued through to the public hearings on water management in the Oldman River basin. At this point, a new wrinkle was added: we began extensively citing the individual presentations made at the public hearings. The reason for doing this was to increase the ECA's accountability to those who took the time and effort to prepare a presentation and to ensure that the Government and the public received an accurate representation of the information obtained from the public hearing process. Public scrutiny of your efforts does wonders for your attention to accuracy and detail!

The second innovation in methodology occurred during the 1981 public hearings on noise. During this hearing, it was decided to take advantage of the Council's Xerox 850 word processor to sort text by keyword. This allowed the use of keywords at the beginning of a hearing comment and eliminated the need to sort the comments prior to typing. This approach made the brief analysis material available about three weeks earlier than previously.

The next innovation was dependent upon the development of the personal computer, its availability at a reasonable price, the declining cost of information storage, and the development of reliable relational data base programs. In 1983 the state of the art was an IBM-XT microcomputer with a 10 megabyte hard drive for information storage, and the dbase II data base program.

dBase II and similar programs permit vast amounts of text to be coded and stored, and allow it to be extracted in any desired pattern. There are some restrictions on the amount of material that can go into an individual record, but it is not a real limitation for the type of content analysis undertaken by the ECA, and even these limitations essentially disappear with dBase III. dBase also has some mathematical capability, which was put to limited use. With these new capabilities, research staff were able to:

1) increase the number of codes used to identify information derived from the hearing, thereby increasing precision. The number of subject codes used in recent hearings shows the following pattern:

Oldman	34
Hazardous Wastes	22
Noise	19
Agriculture	89
Recycling	83

2) The first application of this capability was in the agriculture and recycling hearings, where two subject codes were assigned for each recorded comment. Hence, the possible subject combinations were:

Agriculture	89 x 88 = 7,832
Recycling	83 x 82 = 6,806

It is also possible to sort data by many other variables, such as hearing location and group represented. All combinations of the subject codes are normally printed out and this becomes the source of citations in the Report and Recommendations.

3) It was possible to write a menu-driven data entry and retrieval system in dBase II. Data sheets could then be dropped off at our office as the hearings progressed and entered by secretarial staff as commitments permitted.
4) dBase facilitated the formalization of our information handling system. The system and its operation therefore becomes easier for the public and research staff to review and improve upon. The printouts from the agriculture and recycling hearings are available in the ECA library. About 8,000 records were created from the agriculture hearings and around 2,800 from recycling.
5) dBase made recording information at the hearings easier and more efficient. Previously, the recording form was laid out in blocks and information had to be slotted into the blocks provided. This meant that the coding decision had to be made instantly, that comments tended to be squeezed into inadequate space, and that subjects not allowed for could be missed or forced into inappropriate places.

With dBase, recording sheets are simply lined pages with spaces for codes at the beginning of each line. The pattern of recording is sequential and coding can be considered and reconsidered, either as the presenter proceeds or subsequently. If unforeseen ideas arise, a new code can then be added. When two codes are used, the general guideline is that the second code should provide new information, not more detail on the first code used.

The whole objective of computer coding, cataloging, and retrieval of information is to preserve and make readily available that very precious natural resource: the good sense, technical knowledge, viewpoints, and attitudes that Albertans contribute to ECA public hearings. In the many varied views and suggestions received at the hearings lies the potential solution to major problems. Computer technology merely enables those ideas to be preserved and accessed when needed in the development of the panel's Report and Recommendations.

Post-hearing Meetings and Conferences

Although I have outlined a linear sequence of acquiring information prior to the preparation of a Report and Recommendations, this is not always the case. For example, panel members and research staff attend relevant conferences throughout the duration of a hearing project, and onsite inspections of alternative processes and procedures can occur at any time.

Hearings are always followed by meetings with provincial and federal government agencies. These meetings have two purposes:

1) the panel can ask questions about issues raised in the hearings or arising from other investigations
2) the agency has an opportunity to make a presentation to the panel on a confidential basis.

The scale of this part of the information-gathering phase can be substantial, although the number of meetings varies with the hearing topic. If the topic is relevant to only a few departments, there will be few meetings, for example, seven for the Oldman and six for hazardous wastes. If the topic cuts across the interests of numerous agencies, as did noise, agriculture, and recycling, the meetings can reach 20 or 30. Hence, the post-hearing information collection phase can approximate the scale of the public hearings.

At this stage or during the hearing, the panel may recognize a need for information that is not likely to arise either from the hearings or the post-hearing meetings and is beyond the resources of the Research staff. This can result in hiring a consultant to investigate the matter. Five reports have been generated this way in the last six hearings. Examples are the transportation risk analysis work for the hazardous waste hearings, and a study on red meat demand for the Oldman River hearings.

Preparation of the Report and Recommendations

This is the stage of the hearing process, where the information gathered — from staff investigations, public hearings, conferences and tours, meetings with a wide range of government and non-government organizations, and the panel's knowledge and experience — is integrated into the Report and Recommendations directed to Cabinet and the Minister of Environment.

Reports and Recommendations have been written by panel members alone, by panel members and research staff, and by research staff under panel direction. Regardless of the allocation of writing duties, some general procedures are always followed:

1) Decisions are made by consensus. This means that there is the potential to spend days arguing a contentious point. However, once agreement is reached, all sides of an issue have been meticulously examined and everyone is fully aware of the many facets of the question, and why the viewpoint adopted is the best in the circumstances.
2) No viewpoint is sacred. Any material prepared for the Report and Recommendations is open to comment and review by those involved in the process. Many times, a day or more has been spent on a page or paragraph. This is part of the careful examination required in a consensus-building process.

3) All references to publications and hearing submissions are given a final check prior to passing the document to the editor. Whenever possible, this checking is done by someone other than the original author of the material.
4) Editing and preparation of the camera-ready copy is done in house.

The editor works closely with the writers to improve style and wording, in order to clarify the report's content.

It should be noted that acquisition of computer-based word processing technology has been a tremendous aid in the preparation of a Report and Recommendations. The agriculture and recycling reports were written directly onto disk. The benefits have been:

1) very fast feedback because draft material comes off the printer within hours of its preparation
2) the ability to modify material rapidly, and to be comfortable that errors will not be introduced through retyping
3) reduced workload on secretarial staff, so they are freed up for other tasks
4) the capability to transfer the final draft to the editor on disk, so final modifications can be done easily.

The Report and Recommendations is then published. In recent years we have tended to use two formats: a summary report and a technical report. One major advantage of this approach is that two organizational structures are possible. The summary report can highlight critical information from the much more detailed technical report.

Submission of the Report and Recommendations to Cabinet

Before the Report and Recommendations is publicly released, the panel makes a presentation to the appropriate cabinet committee or committees. This provides Cabinet with an insight into the major conclusions of the report, and provides them an opportunity for reflection before the document is released to the public.

Public Release of the Report and Recommendations

The panel's response to those who took part in the public hearings or who may have a general interest in the hearing topic takes several forms:

1) press conferences in those parts of the province most affected by the Report and Recommendations
2) announcements, to the mailing list for that particular hearing topic, that free copies of the Report and Recommendations are available
3) notices to a variety of provincial, national, and international publications announcing the availability of the publication, along with a synopsis of its content
4) presentations by panel members to any interested audience
5) preparation of articles for publication in popular magazines and journals
6) responding to letters and inquiries about the Report and Recommendations
7) prerecorded video and/or audio presentations by the panel for use by others at public meetings or by the media.

This terminates the ECA public hearing process. The Report and Recommendations have been placed before the provincial government and the public. The responsibility for addressing recommendations lies with the Province, while the public should make its views known to MLAs and cabinet ministers, whether it agrees or disagrees with the solutions the panel proposed.

The responsibility for addressing recommendations lies with the Province.

The Council's Reports and Recommendations have met various fates. Sometimes almost all recommendations have been adopted and implemented; in some cases many have been ignored. When the recommendations have been ignored, there is a tendency for the problems to arise again and again. Often the recommendations are adopted many years after they are originally made, frequently in ignorance of where they originated. A major contribution of the Report and Recommendations is to improve the quality of the public debate on the topic and to provide what are initially innovative approaches and solutions to the problem. Over time, these may become conventional wisdom, incorporated as part of a public consensus on the problem.

Session Three

Strengthening the Roots

Making the Most of Volunteer Involvement in Your Organization

Some Suggestions for Environmental Protection Groups

Dr. Trevor Slack

Dr. Slack is a Professor of Physical Education at the University of Alberta. His special area of interest is studying the structure and process of volunteer organizations, including the organization and management of change.

Throughout Canada and its various provinces, there are a vast number of organizations involved in such environmental issues as wildlife conservation, the protection of historical sites, wilderness preservation, park establishment, and so on. The life blood of these organizations is the volunteer who spends untold amounts of time organizing lobby groups, writing articles, holding meetings, running workshops, and carrying out the many other tasks so vital to the welfare of the environmental lobby. However, despite their importance, volunteers are often neglected or, at best, taken for granted by those who manage and operate these organizations. By way of an example, consider the fact that many of the types of organizations mentioned above appoint members with specialized skills to look after their finances or to promote public awareness of issues, yet almost without exception these agencies have no position on their board to deal with volunteers. While no one would dispute that financial control and public awareness are important issues to environmental groups, the question must be posed: are they any more important than the commitment and welfare of the organization's volunteers? The purpose of this brief article is to suggest some steps that those individuals who manage and operate our environmental protection groups may take to maximize the involvement of volunteers in their organization.

The first and one of the most critical steps in maximizing volunteer involvement is an assessment of the current status of the organization — what are its strengths, its weaknesses, its plans for future projects? An assessment of this nature will enable the organization's management to better determine its current and projected volunteer needs. Once this is completed, managers should examine their volunteer resources — what are the strengths and weakness of current volunteers? Since environmental groups often bring together individuals from disparate backgrounds, it is important that these differences, along with the varying needs of volunteers, be recognized. The best way to determine these is by interviewing volunteers to find out their reasons for joining the organization and what they hope to gain from their involvement. While this may prove a large and problematic task to undertake for existing volunteers, it may be carried out on a less formal basis. However, new volunteers should be met and interviewed by the volunteer coordinator. In this way, it is possible to determine the strengths and weakness of new volunteers and what they are looking for in their volunteer experience. This knowledge, combined with the knowledge of the organization's strengths and weaknesses, enables the completion of the first step in maximizing volunteer involvement, placing the right volunteer in the right job.

It becomes extremely important that volunteers' work provide intrinsic rewards.

Once this step is taken, what other initiatives can the managers of environmental groups take to maximize the involvement of their organization's volunteers? One of the problems that volunteers in environmental groups face in this regard is that there are often few extrinsic rewards for their efforts. For example, attempts to prevent the encroachment of commercial development in park areas may often be unsuccessful, and so volunteers do not see a tangible reward from their efforts. This being the case, it becomes extremely important that volunteers' work provide intrinsic rewards. There are a number of ways in which this can be achieved.

Volunteers should be introduced into the organization in a warm and friendly manner. New volunteers should be introduced to the more experienced volunteers. In this way, the new volunteers will feel more positive and comfortable about their involvement. Volunteers must also feel that the work they are doing is useful and important to the total success of the organization and to the particular project on which they are working. There are a number of ways this objective can be accomplished. For example, volunteers must be kept fully informed about what is happening in the organization. Volunteers should be informed about the organization's goals and objectives and the particular projects with which it is involved. In a number of organizations, this is achieved through a volunteer orientation meeting. If volunteers realize the importance of their work, then they are more likely to be motivated in their tasks.

Another way to maximize volunteer involvement is to ensure that they experience success in their work. This is more likely to happen if the steps outlined previously have been taken and the right volunteer has been placed in the right job. Volunteers are also more likely to experience success if they are supervised and guided in their tasks. When volunteers are assigned tasks, they also need to know precisely what is expected of them, what their responsibilities are, and what authority they have. If given responsibilities and challenged by their work, they are more likely to feel their contribution to the organization is important. Volunteers should not, however, be overburdened with responsibilities, particularly if the tasks are repetitive and mundane. Too much of this type of responsibility will cause discontent and the volunteer is likely to leave the organization.

Managers of environmental organizations must also realize that the motives of volunteers change. Those motives that brought an individual to the organization in the first place may not be effective after a period of time and provision should be made within the organization for volunteers to take on new tasks. The literature on volunteer recruitment often suggests that the first place to look for a volunteer for a new task is in your own organization. That is, look for someone who may be seeking a new challenge. In this regard, care must also be taken to not always assume that volunteers will be happy doing the type of tasks that they do in their remunerated work. For example, don't always assume that an accountant will want to be the organization's treasurer. However, such an individual may be prepared to work with someone to help train them to "keep the books."

Volunteers must also be given the opportunity to grow in their work. The motivations of individual volunteers will vary. Some will be content with a structured, step-by-step task; others may seek personal growth and challenge through the development of new skills. For those wishing to develop skills, it is important to offer training and development opportunities. Volunteers should be kept informed of such events as clinics, workshops, and conferences and should be encouraged to attend. If possible, the organization should pay the expenses of volunteers who wish to attend these types of events.

Another way to maximize volunteer involvement is to include them in appropriate areas of decision making. Instead of just delegating duties to volunteers, organizational managers should attempt to involve them in decisions regarding the different tasks to be undertaken. In this way, the volunteer is more likely "to buy into the project" and thus feel a stronger sense of commitment. Involvement in the decision-making process will also help volunteers to realize that their efforts are being recognized and that their ideas are important.

Since not all of the projects with which environmental groups become involved result in direct success, it is important that volunteers be given details of what was accomplished. For example, many of the projects of environmental groups may extend over a protracted time period and may not result in the desired end product. However, volunteers should be kept informed continually, maybe through a brief report, of successes that are achieved, such as increased public awareness and sensitivity to issues relating to the environment. These types of steps can help maintain interest and enthusiasm in what are often discouraging times.

These, then, are some of the steps that the managers of environmental groups can take to ensure that the level of intrinsic reward for their volunteers is kept high. There are, in addition, several other steps that do not deal specifically with the intrinsic rewards for volunteers, but will nevertheless help maximize their involvement.

The first of these relates to the provision of both short- and long-term job commitments for volunteers. Many people cannot give up a large number of hours per week to volunteer. However, if a task is divided up into smaller units, they may be able to commit time to this. This concept of job sharing emanates from business organizations and has been employed by some volunteer groups. The essential idea here is that, rather than one person taking on a task alone, the job is shared between two cooperating individuals. If provision is made for this type of arrangement, then volunteer resources may be utilized more effectively. It is often easy to neglect those volunteers who only have small amounts of time to devote; however, if provision is made for these people, they can make substantive contributions to the organization.

It is also important that volunteers be recognized for their efforts in the organization. The recognition given to a volunteer can make the difference to their continued involvement. The method of recognizing a volunteer's contribution may vary from the giving of a tangible object such as a pin, a T-shirt, a certificate, a plaque, and so on, to the giving of something intangible such as a thank you or words of praise. Some organizations often take a small amount of money from their funds and hold recognition events, such as a wine and cheese night, a "thank-you tea," or some similar event. If well organized, these events can go a long way toward letting volunteers know how much they are appreciated. By taking one or more of the steps outlined above, the organization is providing volunteers with an assurance that their work is important and not something that is taken for granted.

A final way in which environmental groups can help to maximize the involvement of volunteers relates to the payment of out-of-pocket expenses and costs for child care. While no one volunteers to make money, volunteers should not be expected to spend large amounts of cash as well as large amounts of time. By reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses and child care cost, organizations are creating increased opportunities for involvement and helping to ensure the goodwill and continued involvement of current volunteers.

The best recruiters of volunteers are other satisfied volunteers.

The steps that environmental groups take to encourage continued volunteer involvement, plus the recognition they provide, are two ways to ensure the continuing person power necessary to run successful programs. As environmental groups expand and take on new tasks, they will require more volunteer labor. The best recruiters of volunteers are other satisfied volunteers. Consequently, the time and effort that an organization devotes to its volunteers can ensure their continued involvement in the organization and also their help as recruiters of other volunteers, two factors that are vital to the future success of our environmental groups.

Group Organization and Evolution

Dr. Bob Hinings

Dr. Hinings is a Professor in the Business Faculty of the University of Alberta, where he is chairman of the Department of Organizational Analysis. He is interested in the study of the management of change in organizations.

Actually, Trevor and I are kind of a pair, and not just because we both come from Britain. In fact, we didn't know each other until a few years ago, when we discovered we were born and bred about 20 miles from each other. But we've actually been doing a lot of work together over the last few years on volunteer organizations.

Trevor talked about the whole business of getting to the timely and motivated volunteer. That all takes place, of course, within an organized framework. What an organization is, after all, is a structure and a set of systems for getting work done. And while you're getting that work done, you are communicating with each other.

One of the things that strikes us is that the organizations in the volunteer sector have been getting rather more complicated over the years — rather more complex, rather more bureaucratized in many ways. I want to look at some of the pressures that are causing that, at the extent to which they're going to go on, at what the consequences of that are for communication structures, and, in particular, because you are a volunteer organization, at the relationship between the volunteer and the professional staff that organizations of this type are increasingly recruiting.

Trevor hinted at the fact that all the volunteer groups involved in the environmental, recreation, and sports worlds have been expanding their activity. There's more and more to be done. That's one of the reasons why it's very important to pay increasing attention to recruiting and retaining volunteers, because there are more organizations that want volunteers. They're making bigger demands on those volunteers. So you've got an enormous market out there for the services of volunteers.

These organizations are offering more and more programs. Sports organizations are offering more programs. Environmental organizations are trying to get involved in more issues, contact more people, deal with more groups, trying to involve more and more people.

Now all that means is that your organization gets more and more complex. It's like a business organization that starts off saying, we're in cement, and then says, well, we want to move away from cement into ready-mix concrete, and we want to move from ready-mix concrete into concrete ties, and we want to move from concrete ties into construction. It gets more and more complicated and more and more difficult to run. It goes more and more toward a conglomerate rather than a nice, single-purpose organization. One of the things that is happening to your kinds of organizations, I suspect, is that you're getting into more programs and trying to contact more groups. I'll bet at your AJMs and in many of your meetings you are chasing around saying, how can we do more? How can we get involved with more things? The more things you get involved with, the more people you need, and the more you're going to start to change the way you organize, even if you don't recognize it immediately.

Another important thing about volunteer organizations during the last decade is that there's more and more involvement both with government and by government in them. The particular work we've been doing is in the sport and recreation organizations. We find that Alberta Recreation and Parks have special units to deal with volunteer organizations. There's the Alberta Sport Council. There's Fitness Canada. There's Parks Canada. There's Sport Canada. And we can even throw in groups like Alberta Environment and Environment Canada, and I'm sure lots of others.

Government involvement usually comes through things like funding, and planning. Governments usually don't give money without asking for something in return. Usually what they ask for in return is planning documents. They say, here, we'll give you the money and you produce for us a three-year plan. Often, it seems to me, they ask for the plan, but there isn't a lot of follow up the year after to see if you actually do it. Very often, inside the organization there's not a lot of follow up until you do the actual recap plan. The planning becomes a kind of mechanism for ensuring the flow of money into the organization and, as long as you go through the hoops, you get the money.

What that greater government involvement means and what that increased emphasis on planning that comes along with it means, again, is more internal complexity in the organization. You have to have somebody to do the plan. You have to have somebody to manage the relationship with government. Of course, you're in an interesting relationship: even though many of your organizations try to get money from government, you're also often involved in critical roles with government, which may seem strange. But you have people in the organization to handle those matters.

It's very easy for a volunteer organization to keep adding bits and pieces and to end up in a situation where the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing.

The more you become dependent on other organizations for funding, the more you start to need people inside the organization just so you can handle that. The more, then, you need some way of communicating between people. It's very easy for a volunteer organization to keep adding bits and pieces and to end up in a situation where the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. That's particularly difficult.

One of the things that struck me, actually, in the five years I've been in Canada — in Britain distance never struck me as anything terribly important. I regarded anything over an hour and a half travelling as being a hell of a long way away. I lived in Birmingham for quite a few years and London, after all, was only an hour and a half train ride away, and there was a train every half hour from downtown Birmingham to downtown London. I could catch the early train, get down there by 10 o'clock and be ready for a meeting at 10:30, leave the meeting at 12, jump on the 12:30 train and be back in Birmingham at 2 o'clock, all for about $40. So I never regarded distance as important. The first time I came to Alberta, I realized that distance was extremely important, and that shows that I have difficulty recognizing the vast continent and the time zones. Switching time zones in Britain means we should be in Poland or Russia or somewhere.

Now that's very important, because as your organizations grow, not only do they grow by function, but you add a vice-president for this and a vice-president for that, and you have a volunteer to work on this project, and you have a volunteer to work on that project. You appoint an executive director. You have a program co-ordinator, or whatever the particular phraseology. And these people tend to be geographically scattered.

The best way to do it is face-to-face, because when you communicate face-to-face, then things get worked out and you find out whether you mean the same thing when you say the same words.

One of the things that we know about communication is that the best way to do it is face-to-face, because when you communicate face-to-face, then things get worked out and you find out whether you mean the same thing when you say the same words. Communicating by letters and reports and memos is necessary, but is not a particularly good way of communicating. That's a very important problem for your organization and that, of course, leads to things like having conferences and so on.

As you become involved in more activities, as you add more people to help with them, your communication problems increase. One of the basic ways of dealing with these sorts of issues is to appoint specialists, to appoint technical and administrative staff. One of the huge growth areas in volunteer organizations over the past decade has been the addition of professional staff. It's one of the things, actually, that you can get funding for from the government. Governments seem to believe that you're a better organization if you've got some full-time, paid employees. To give you an example outside the environment, there is Sport Canada. As was said to the olympic sports, we think it's a good idea if you have somebody called a director-general. And if you do have a director-general, we'll pay 75 percent of the salary costs. Suddenly, director-generals are springing up everywhere. In the olympic sports organization, you can't turn a good thing down, can you? And if you can get 75 percent, you're going to get a big reaction. So you get the notion that professional staff are a good thing.

Of course, professional staff are a good thing. It's better to have people who know what they're doing than people who don't know what they're doing. One of the ideas behind coping with the increase in activities and differences that are growing in these organizations is to appoint these kinds of people. But you have to be aware of the consequences, because what you begin to do when you introduce specialist staff is change the whole communication and decision-making process.

Communication is not just about spreading information. Communication is about making decisions.

When we talk about communication, we can talk about it at a couple of different levels. There's communication at the level of ensuring that the right kind of information gets round to the right people — talking to people, sending people minutes of meetings, producing newsletters, having executive meetings, board meetings, and so on. That's very important. That's communication. But communication is not just about spreading information. Communication is about making decisions. Communication is about saying, we've decided to do this; it's somebody's responsibility to make this decision. When you introduce full-time staff into an organization, like executive directors, assistant directors, and so on, they expect to make some decisions. They're trained people, after all. You don't really expect somebody who has been trained to do a particular thing to come into an organization and then not make any decisions.

One of the things about volunteer organizations, it seems to me, is that very often professional staff or full-time staff can make whatever decisons they like until the volunteers don't like it. Then maybe they get fired. So a very important issue, under these general pressures of trying to do more, of more government involvement — on a two-way street, both the involvement of government in the organization and involvement of the organization with government — is that you tend to attempt to be more internally rational, if you like, to actually build systems, to think clearly about what you're doing, which leads to rather a more complicated organizational structure and systems. You introduce more systems.

You introduce professionals and you are changing the communication structure and the decision-making structure of the organization. So many of the problems that we see in volunteer organizations come over who's now making the decisions. We know there are two kinds of volunteers. There are volunteers, like yourselves, I assume, who are there to run the organization in a policy sense; you may well also be involved in day-to-day tasks, figuring out the responsibilities for running the organization. And then there are the volunteers who are there to do jobs, to go out and do the bird count or the phone calls. Now, talking about the volunteers who are there for policy purposes, as soon as you start to introduce more roles and, in particular, more professional roles, you're in effect beginning to decentralize the organization. You're saying, we're pushing decision making down. But that seems to be an area which causes a lot of strain and tension.

There are two reasons why it causes a lot of strain and tension. One is that it begins to strike at the very heart of volunteerism; it begins to raise the whole issue of, are these organizations volunteer organizations or are they not? To put that in a sort of easy way, there are volunteer organizations where the organizations are controlled by volunteers and the work is carried out by professionals. You have volunteer organizations where they're controlled by professionals and the work is carried out by volunteers. That developed in the sport area. Think of an organization like alpine skiing. They even put the word "amateur" in quotation marks when they're writing documents. They are an amateur, volunteer-controlled organization, but in fact, they have on the order of 30 professional staff and their main rationale for having volunteers is so that they can sweep the snow, make sure the track is well-groomed, and that there are enough people to deal with the athletes and so on when they come there.

One of the things that's begun to develop in the sport area is that there are now three or four organizations where the director-general is, in fact, the chief executive in the corporate model. The director-general is a full-time professional and is president of the organization. It's happening in track and field. It's on the way now in figure skating, swimming, and a few others. This process was set in motion a decade or so ago. As you introduce more and more high-powered and highly qualified staff — for example, someone went down and recruited somebody called "vice-president," full time, who had worked at the Bay for many years and got him to work for swimming. Now he's not going to move from being a senior manager with the Bay to being a senior manager for swimming and say, okay, now I'll do exactly what everybody tells me and I don't expect to make any decisions. He expects to make decisions. So one of the tracks or roads that many volunteer organizations are on is to say, let's introduce professional staff for all the best reasons, because that gives us expertise. But what you have to look at, and ask a question about, is what will this do about the ways in which we make decisions? What do professional staff do to the control of the organization and how we control it?

In our analysis of 150 or 160 organizations covering organizations, such as Alberta Recreation and Parks association for alpine skiing, we found that they spend very little time thinking about decison making, except in a very mechanical way. The mechanical way in which they think about it is, they think they ought to write job descriptions, terms of reference for committees, and that kind of thing. They don't say, what's going to happen when we do the budget this year? Who's going to make which decision? What do we actually expect from our executive director in terms of the kinds of decisions he makes? And how are we going to handle the inevitable conflicts that come up?

Along with that goes a series of things I just wanted to touch on. As your organizations get bigger, as they do more, as they introduce more and more professional staff, I mention the word "bureaucracy." And I mean that in the best sense. We usually think of bureaucracy as something that's bad. Bureaucracy means red tape. What I mean by bureaucracy is that you try to actually rationalize and systematize activities. One of the pressures that comes from the funding agencies that you get involved with very often is a pressure to rationalize — we'll only give you the money if you've got written plans. We'll only give you the money if you've got something called a "human resource management system," whatever that might be. We'll only give you the money if you actually have a proper budgeting system. We'll only give you the money if you can specify exactly for what area, how you're going to select athletes, how you're going to train athletes, and so on. So what does your organization do in response? It puts in those kinds of systems. It trys to systematize its policy making, its planning, its budgeting, its financial control, its communication, its decision-making, producing package programs for activities. All of that makes sense. It's all part of that general process that says, it's better to know what you're doing than not to know what you're doing.

But it's very easy to do that in little bits and pieces and, first, not to communicate about it and, second, not to recognize the knock-on effects of one on another. In talking about volunteer activities, Trevor is saying, roughly, you should think a little bit more systematically about how you handle volunteers and what you do with them. When you start doing that — in effect, building a volunteer human resource management system — what's the effect of that on budgeting? Because, put aside $100 here, look for a little money there, go out and raise a bit of money here — it's got to be integrated into the plan. It's got to be integrated into the budget. It's got to be integrated into the activity.

Either your professional staff or your executive committee board, but obviously the two together, have got to be continuously reviewing your organization.

So it's not just a single activity. As your organization becomes that little bit more complicated, so introducing and doing one thing has all sorts of effects on other things. That means that either your professional staff or your executive committee board, but obviously the two together, have got to be continuously reviewing your organization. Otherwise, it's going to be like

Topsy. It's just going to grow and grow. And it'll sow the seeds of its own destruction.

It's very easy to keep doing things in an organization, to think that doing more is better. And, clearly, in terms of the goals of most of your organizations, simply doing more is better. It's like at the university. We want to do more. We want to have more students, though certainly not in our faculty, where we have a quota. We want more good students, or even better students. We want more graduate students, or more Ph.D. students. We certainly want more faculty, because you know you can get a better education the more education people you have, although that relationship has never really been shown very strongly. It's one of those things you just know — the same way that you know protecting the environment is a good thing. And we want more money, of course, from government. If they give us 1 or 2 percent more, we know that's not enough and we need more than that.

If you introduce a sub-committee, you're not just adding one to the organization, you're adding a whole series of relationships.

It's very easy to want more and to know that doing more is good, but the organizational consequences of that are not thought about. There may be no people in the organization who will say, it's my responsibility or it's our responsibility to think through what the impact of introducing a program co-ordinator, or what's the impact of introducing another committee or a sub-committee. If you introduce a sub-committee, you're not just adding one to the organization, you're adding a whole series of relationships. You add a new person, a new role — whether volunteer or professional — and you're not just adding one bit to the organization, you're adding a whole network of relationships and communication structure. When you add this one, you say, we want you to communicate here, here, and here, and, please, the most important thing is to keep everybody informed, because we all want to be informed all the time. Then, of course, we complain about the amount of stuff we get telling us about this.

So what I'm suggesting is that there are a whole series of trends going on that we can't reverse, that we don't want to reverse. You can't stop time. You can't stop where we are and go to somewhere else. But all the time you've got to look at a couple of things, the two things that we're trying to emphasize, and we think very often they are not emphasized. One is, what does it do to your volunteers? I've heard Trevor talk facts and figures about the levels of volunteer activity in Canada and Alberta. They're enormous. There's an enormous difference between Canada and somewhere like Britain. But the demands are getting more and more, and there's not an endless supply of volunteer labor out there.

It may be that there are new ways of looking for people. After all, one of the things that's beginning to happen in Canada — and a number of us see ourselves, and I see myself actually involved in this — is the creeping grey wave, the aging of the population. You probably know that McDonald's now are utilizing seniors because there are fewer and fewer teenagers to work in the restaurant business. Like teenagers', seniors' labor is cheap. There are different client groups you've got to look at.

Similarly, as we make more demands on people, so we are making more demands on our organizations. The environment as an issue has always been there, but not anything like as strong 20 years ago as it is now. It's an area that has really mushroomed and blossomed. As that happens, what you're doing is, over time, building new kinds of organizations with different kinds of communication demands. It isn't revolutionary for most of you. It's not happening over a six-month or a 12-month period. It's happening in a more evolutionary fashion, although, from time to time, if the government comes along and says, we'll give you x thousand dollars for doing this, what do you do? You suddenly start doing it. That might have a massive effect inside the organization without you really thinking about it.

What I'm suggesting is that you need the organization to sit down and say, okay, every time we do something, and every time we add a fee, we add an activity, we add a new client group, we add the new relationship inside or outside the organization, we add new professional staff, there are two key questions: what does this do to the way we make decisions? How is this going to alter the way we make decisions? Second, what does it do for the way we generally communicate? How do we tie this new bit properly into the organization? Don't assume that everything is self-evidently good or that everybody else in the organization will recognize it. Thank you.

Don't assume that everything is self-evidently good or that everybody else in the organization will recognize it.

Mobilizing Public Support for Environment: The Case of South Moresby Island, British Columbia

Dr. Philip Dearden

Dr. Dearden is a Professor of Geography at the University of Victoria, British Columbia.

On July 6, 1987, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Premier Bill Van der Zalm of British Columbia signed a memorandum of understanding to sign "as soon as possible" a federal-provincial agreement to establish South Moresby as a Natural Park Reserve. It was an historic and emotional moment for many of those present, representing over 15 years of prolonged and bitter dispute over the fate of the island archipelago. The triumph was all the more remarkable in that the park had been established, not through the usual channels and procedures of park systems planning and bureaucratic structures, but by a wave of mass public support rising to such a crescendo that the politicians had no alternative but to be carried along as the flotsam and jetsam of public will. The purpose of this paper is to indicate some of the factors contributing to this mobilization of public support.

As with all social science research, it is difficult to ascribe direct cause and effect to any of the factors outlined below. Undoubtedly a complex multiplicity of factors influenced public motivations, not all of which are readily apparent. However, the following, based upon personal involvement with the issue for the last six years (as Chairman of the B.C. Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society), as well as professional interest, seeks to isolate some of the reasons why the South Moresby issue became of such national concern over the last few years.

The paper is organized into two main sections, inputs and outputs. The first section, inputs, is divided into three subsections: the issue, the people, and finance. The second section, outputs, is divided into public support and political motivations. This is followed by a discussion and conclusion.

Inputs

Inputs describes the combination of factors resulting in the outputs — public support and political motivation — that eventually led to the signing of the agreement to establish the park. Essentially, the inputs conform to those of any marketing strategy: a product, people to sell that product and devise strategies to do so, and the financial support required to enable the strategies to be implemented (Figure 1). Each will be discussed in turn.

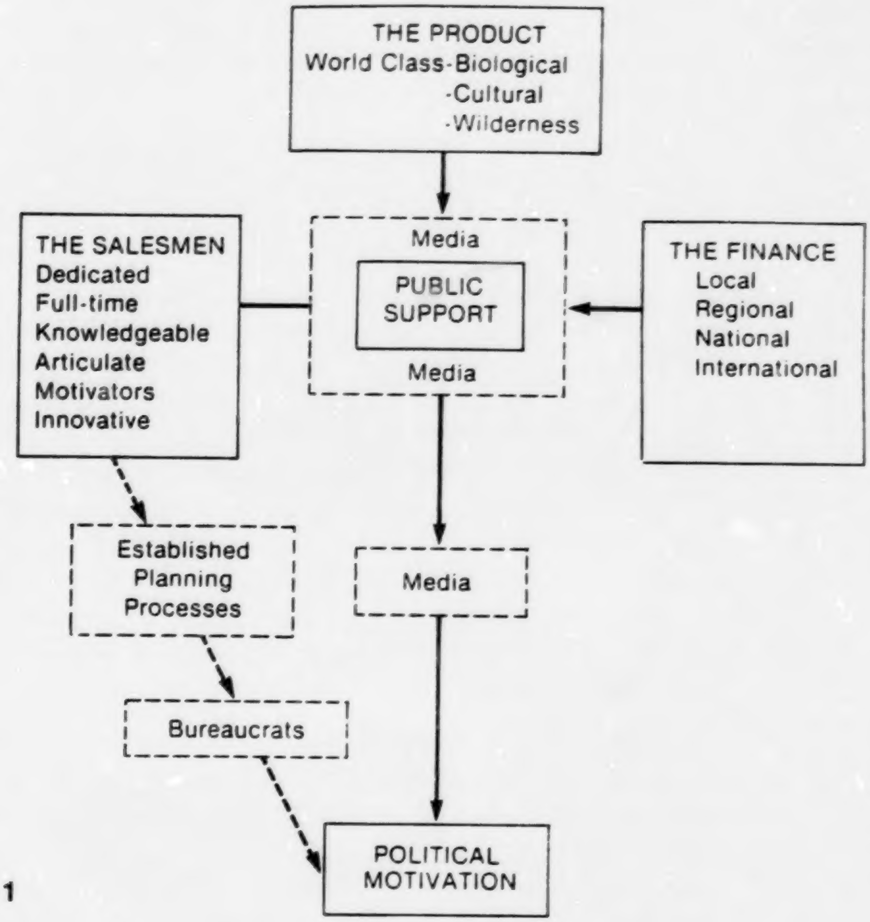
THE PRODUCT
World Class-Biological
-Cultural
-Wilderness
THE SALESMEN
Dedicated
Full-time
Knowledgeable
Articulate
Motivators
Innovative
Media
PUBLIC SUPPORT
Media
THE FINANCE
Local
Regional
National
International
Established Planning Processes
Media
Bureaucrats
POLITICAL MOTIVATION

Figure 1

The Product

Although the business of marketing appears to specialize in being able to sell any product irrespective of quality, it certainly helps if the product being sold is of an unquestionably fine pedigree. South Moresby was such a product.

There was never any doubt in the minds of the people involved in the campaign that they had the finest product possible.

There was never any doubt in the minds of the people involved in the campaign that they had the finest product possible. There were not even any close competitors. This is important because the public and politicians become confused when asked to make choices among alternatives they are not too sure about. South Moresby stood head and shoulders above the other areas seeking and clamoring for public attention. This, the supporters of South Moresby knew. The main task was to make others aware of the qualities that make the Islands unique.

What were these qualities? The South Moresby archipelago is blessed with outstanding biological and cultural characteristics. It has been called "the Canadian Galapagos," referring to the large numbers of endemic species found on the Islands. This endemism has resulted, it is thought, from the glacial history. The last glaciation was not as harsh as on the mainland. Ice-free areas survived to provide refugia for hardy species. Glacial ice melted more quickly than on the continent. Thus, when the latter was still groaning under ice, pollen cores indicate the Charlottes hosted a mature and stabilized forest in some areas. This headstart on succession, coupled with the isolation of the Islands, some 100 kilometers off the mainland coast, has given rise to the unique flora and fauna. There are several species of moss (for example, *Wijkia carlotae, Seligeria careyana*) that occur only in the Charlottes. Others show fascinating disjunctions. *Dichodontium subporodictyon* has been found only in the Charlottes, Scotland, and the Himalaya. Several subspecies of flowering plants (for example, *Senecio newcombei, Lloydia serotina* ssp *flaura*) show similar endemism.

A similar story can be seen in the animal populations. Glacial history and isolation have allowed different varieties to develop and flourish. Perhaps most studied of these are the sticklebacks displaying different adaptations in different lakes. Other unique species include the world's largest black bear, smallest caribou (now extinct), a pine marten with orange under fur, Haida ermine, dusky shrew, deer mice, saw-whet owl, hairy woodpecker, and Steller's jay.

It is not this endemism that strikes the casual visitor, however. It is the sheer abundance of life to be found in the archipelago. From the towering spruce and cedar trees to the giant California mussels, abundant rains and a nutrient-rich marine environment have conspired to produce large individuals. Large numbers of individuals are especially noticeable in the marine environment. The intertidal biomass at Burnaby Narrows must equal that to be found anywhere in the world. Sea mammals abound. The Steller's sea lion rookery at Cape St. James is the largest on the west coast of North America. Eleven different whale species may be seen. Pacific white-side dolphins and Dall's porpoise are common sights bowriding on passing vessels.

It is perhaps the seabirds, however, that most epitomize the biological productivity of the Islands. It is estimated that they are home to over 25 percent of all the nesting seabirds of the Canadian Pacific. Most abundant are the alcids, comprising 75 percent of the breeders and including spectacular species such as the horned and tufted puffins. Large numbers of Peale's peregrine falcon and bald eagle prey on these species.

This unique biological heritage is matched by the cultural component. The Queen Charlotte Islands are the ancestral home of the Haida people, one of the most culturally advanced indigenous peoples to evolve on the continent. The Haida were, and still are, to some extent, a seafaring race. They constructed giant longhouses in villages in isolated coastal sites throughout the Queen Charlottes. Here they thrived and developed, leaving a rich heritage of totem poles to tell of their ancestry and beliefs.

Following decimation by smallpox, the Haida abandoned many of their villages and tried to reconsolidate in villages on Graham Island. The spectacular villages they left behind were looted and plundered by collectors from all over the world, some official, some unofficial, to carry off the remains of the unique artistic vision of the Haida. Totem poles, personal possessions, and longhouse carvings found themselves in museums throughout the world. What is left are the pieces not considered worth removing. Yet they still form a most moving and forceful testimony to the spirits of the people who lived in the villages. Indeed, one of the most isolated sites, Ninstints, saved perhaps because of this isolation, is sufficiently moving to have been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Thus the product being sold had two very tangible world-class characteristics in the biological and cultural heritage. Added to this was a powerful intangible spirit, the spirit of the wilderness. Known by names such as "Islands at the Edge" and "the Misty Isles," South Moresby captured the imagination of an urbanized society. Not only were they islands — and authors such as Yi fu Tuan (1974) have discussed man's long fascination with islands — but also they were primeval islands, perceived as being virtually untouched.

The product being sold had two very tangible world-class characteristics in the biological and cultural heritage.

It is not my intent here to delve into the reef-studded waters of socio-psycho-biology, but merely to suggest that deep within many of us is a wish to believe in the existence of such an "island paradise." This third aspect of the triumvirate of biological heritage, cultural heritage, and island wilderness paradise should not be underestimated in its power to play to the imagination and dreams of modern, urbanized man and to help motivate people on an individual basis.

The Salesmen

Much has been written in the academic literature on interest groups, their philosophies, organization, and methods (for example, see Lowe and Goyder 1983; Milbrath 1984; Pross 1986). It is not my intention here to review this literature, but rather to provide a more case-specific, bare-bones, personal account of the South Moresby affair and the salesmen involved. The salesmen can be seen as a pyramid (Figure 2), with the apex of small numbers of local

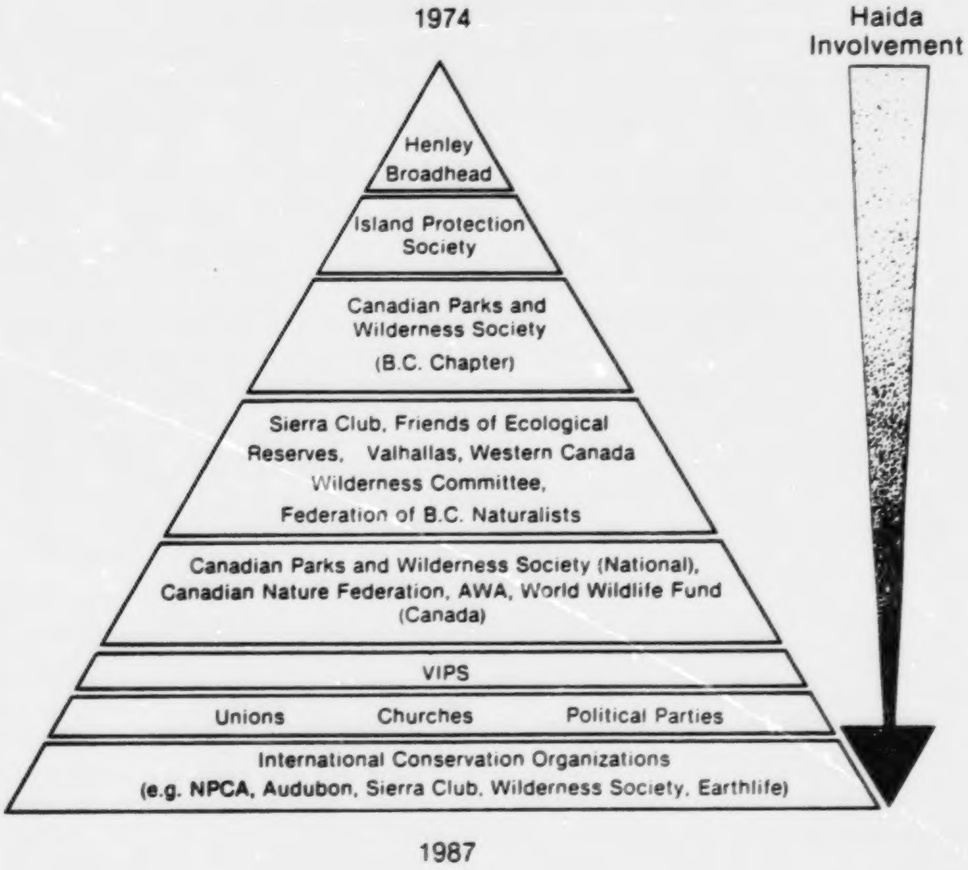
1974
Haida Involvement
Henley Broadhead
Island Protection Society
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (B.C. Chapter)
Sierra Club, Friends of Ecological Reserves, Valhallas, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Federation of B.C. Naturalists
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (National), Canadian Nature Federation, AWA, World Wildlife Fund (Canada)
VIPS
Unions
Churches
Political Parties
International Conservation Organizations (e.g. NPCA, Audubon, Sierra Club, Wilderness Society, Earthlife)
1987

Figure 2

people down to a base of perhaps millions of people who were later involved in some way through the participation of large international non-government organizations.

Throughout the development of the South Moresby affair, from initiation to the signing of the Agreement, two individuals were particularly closely involved — Thom Henley and John Broadhead. They were both excellent salesmen: dedicated to the cause, knowledgeable, persuasive, articulate, and hardworking. They both worked full-time on the issue and were the initial driving force in expanding public awareness. They co-ordinated the production of an award-winning book (*Islands at the Edge* by the Islands Protection Society), solicited funds, gave talks, sat on planning teams, and sought the assistance of organized environmental groups to help share the burden and to be a source for funding. In the early years, the main support came from a Queen Charlottes-based group, the Islands Protection Society. As a local organization, the IPS had fairly restricted opportunities for fund raising and political lobbying. To help with these aspects, the pyramid once more broadened out to include the provincial chapter of a national organization — the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (then known as the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada). The Chapter opened a special bank account — the Queen Charlotte Trust Fund, specifically to funnel funds for advocacy on the Queen Charlottes. Most of this money was used by the Islands Protection Society and their principals. The affiliation (IPS later became a formal affiliate of the Society) also gave access to use of newsletters and the magazine *Park News* to publicize South Moresby and the need for protection to a wider audience.

They were both excellent salesmen: dedicated to the cause, knowledgeable, persuasive, articulate, and hardworking.

By the early 1980s, the issue was becoming more well-known among other environmental groups. Principals of these groups, several on a full-time basis, became closely involved with the issue and also brought their groups into the fray. The Sierra Club of Western Canada, the Friends of the Ecological Reserves, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, and the Valhallas Society were among the supporters and, indeed, took the lead from the impetus shown by the earlier groups, the IPS and CPAWS. Highly co-ordinated strategies formed, spearheaded by Henley, Broadhead, and the principals of the groups, who later brought in their organizations to implement the strategies.

This group lobbied persistently and aggressively. They travelled to conferences and gave impromptu addresses, barraged the media, gave slide shows, and came up with many innovative ideas. One such idea was the Caravan. A cross-country journey would start in St. John's, Newfoundland, and proceed mostly by train, all across the country, stopping in each city to hold rallies and generate support. The Caravan was a huge success both in terms of the support expressed across the country and the media coverage it generated.

And this was the goal: public support. Both Henley and Broadhead had sat through countless meetings and studies to persuade the B.C. government of the need to save South Moresby from the axe. This route to political motivation had not worked. It was the official route, a trap of public participation, countless bureaucrats, committees, reports and recommendations, all of which could be, and were, ignored by the politicians. Any less committed salesmen would have been exhausted by this process. It only served, however, to give Broadhead and Henley renewed commitment and energy for the other route — political motivation by public pressure (Figure 1).

The official route [was] a trap of public participation, countless bureaucrats, committees, reports and recommendations, all of which could be, and were, ignored by the politicians.

As the pyramid continued to broaden its base of support, it became increasingly difficult to describe individual groups or actions that were important. One important strategy was not only to lobby key politicians and bureaucrats and raise mass public support, but also to aim for "important people" support. This took several avenues. One was to convert — and I use the word convert on purpose, as by now this had become a religious crusade to many — celebrities to the cause, people who were well-known and could, in turn, help mobilize wider public support. Some of these worked very successfully, the David Suzuki programs on the issue being a case in point. The worth of others, such as the celebrity-ridden "blue-ribbon" Save South Moresby Committee, with people such as Pierre Berton, is less obvious.

Another strategy was to target less well-known "important people." These were mainly people with excellent personal political and business contacts who would be prepared to work quietly through those contacts to influence decision-makers on this one particular issue. In B.C. many of these people were strong Social Credit supporters, but disagreed with the government policy on South Moresby. Jim Pattison, the Expo President, was rumored to be in this category. Another example is the move by the Task Force on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility to persuade former federal cabinet minister and strong parks advocate Jean Chretien to use his influence as a director of British Columbia Forest Products (the parent company of Western Forest Products) to urge negotiations with the Haida.

A major but unplanned help in this field was the clientele on board the largest charter yacht in the area, the *Darwin Sound II*. The vessel runs 10-day charters round South Moresby from April to October and has taken more charter visitors to the Islands than any other operator. The trip attracts a fairly wealthy, well-educated, professional tourist. Some of these are well-known public figures such as John Turner and Arthur Hailey, but most others are businessmen, lawyers, doctors, professors, engineers, and other professionals from around the world. Once convinced of the need to save South Moresby from the axe, and few if any are not by the time they have completed the trip, they provide a remarkable fifth column to work quietly from the inside to influence decisions. It will never be known how important the voyage of Brian Williams was on the *Darwin Sound II*, in the later recommendation of the Wilderness Advisory Committee, of which he was the Chairman, to preserve South Moresby.

This diversification of strategies increased down to the base of the pyramid (Figure 2). By the mid-1980s, South Moresby was of major concern to national environmental interest groups who were devoting considerable resources to the issue and giving it wide publicity through their magazines and public slide shows. Other national organizations, church groups, unions, and political parties made official statements supporting South Moresby. This still did not seem to be enough to persuade the B.C. government to preserve the area. The only other place to go was outside the country. A coalition of four environmental groups — the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the Canadian Nature Federation, World Wildlife Fund (Canada), and the Islands Protection Society — sought UNESCO support to declare South Moresby a World Heritage Site in Danger. Major international environmental groups were encouraged to donate resources to the issue. Thom Henley was once again central to this expansion by gaining the support of the influential National Parks and Conservation Association of the U.S. This group then brought in other allies, the Wilderness Society, Audubon, Sierra Club, and others, all very influential in American politics and commanding vast resources. Paul Pritchard, President of the NPCA, came to B.C., met with politicians and appeared on several television and radio programs to emphasize the international importance of the issue. Other international groups, such as the U.K.-based Earthlife and World Wildlife Fund, also became involved. International magazines such as *National Geographic* ran feature articles on the battle. Reporters from the *New York Times* and *London Observer* were sent to give a perspective on the issue. Thus concern over South Moresby grew from two individuals to a core group to a wide international clientele through some of the strategies mentioned above.

The role of the Haida should not be forgotten in all this. Although they originally had a low profile, Haida concerns over logging on Lyell Island and the subsequent road blocks and arrest of their elders did much to bring South Moresby into the living rooms of everyday Canadians through television broadcasts. However, it should be noted that the goal of the Haida was, and still is, to prevent logging and achieve recognition of their native land claim to their ancestral home, Gwaaia Haanas (Place of Wonder). They were not lobbying for a national park. The differences in these positions are only now being realized by some of the officials involved. Some environmental groups were aware of these problems from an early date but chose to give full support to the Haida to fight the common enemy, the extractive industries. Conscious strategy decisions were made, for example, not to physically help the Haida logging road blockade. The message of the conflict was carried much more forcefully by the arresting of the Haida elders than it could ever have been by arresting hundreds of environmentalists.

Finance

Substantial amounts of money are required to gain effective political lobbying and public awareness.

The combination of having a world-class product and dedicated and articulate salesmen helped bring financial resources to bear on the issue. Substantial amounts of money are required to gain effective political lobbying and public awareness. Attending meetings, giving slide shows, travel, producing pamphlets, organizing rallies, and paying for advertising all cost money. The sources of money reflect the layers of the pyramid discussed above. Initially money came from local and regional sources — committed individuals donating either directly to the cause or to an environmental group which used the money for that purpose. As the issue grew in popularity, donations came from a wider geographical base but were essentially small donations. Only in the latter stages, during the last couple of years, were more substantial donations forthcoming from some of the "important people" mentioned above and the wealthier international environmental groups. Examples of the former would include substantial donations by artists such as Robert Bateman, Jack Shadboldt, and Toni Onley and writer Margaret Atwood. Nonetheless, many of the original core group, especially those working full-time on the issue, found themselves in impecuniary circumstances most of the time and some are still considerably in debt. Raising finances was a constant and debilitating chore throughout the campaign.

Outputs

The three inputs described above, the product, the salesmen, and the finances, were combined with a view to influence political decision-making. It should be noted that the routes formally established by the politicians for such purposes, through bureaucratic planning processes, had proven totally inadequate. South Moresby supporters entangled in such processes realized that brilliant oratorials given behind closed doors to closed ears made little sense. They had to spring outside such structures to effect changes in policy by politicians. This was largely achieved by increasing public awareness of the issue and bringing public pressure to bear.

Public Support

Public support is not easy to measure outside the usual democratic realm of taking a vote on the issue. Several polls were conducted by various bodies, but should not be considered gospel. One, for example, commissioned by the *Sun* newspaper in Vancouver indicated that 50 percent of respondents supported the civil disobedience of the Haida on Lyell Island, while 31 percent disagreed with this action. Whether the issue actually had majority public support is not really critical. What is critical is that the inputs were able to mobilize substantial public support as an output. This is clearly witnessed by the numbers of letters received by politicians and newspapers, the numbers of people who attended rallies coast to coast, and the numbers who contributed financially. The Wilderness Advisory Committee in its brief three-month life received over a thousand briefs, the vast majority on South Moresby.

What is critical is that the inputs were able to mobilize substantial public support as an output.

The media were critical in linking the inputs to the outputs and the two outputs together. There is considerable debate in the academic literature (for example, Parlour 1980; Dearden and Andressen 1987) as to how the media function in such situations. Do the media drive the issues or do the issues drive the media? In the course of the South Moresby dispute, both forms of interaction were important, with the balance going from the latter to the former as the story developed.

Initially, few news outlets, written or electronic, were interested in the issue. One specific strategy of the core group was to cultivate reporters interested in the issue in key media outlets, in other words, to prod the media. This strategy continued throughout the issue, but became less important as the issue took hold of the public imagination. Instead of environmentalists calling the media, the media started to call the environmentalists and prod for information. Toward the latter part of the struggle, the author, as Chairman of the B.C. Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, was consistently approached by the media, both nationally and internationally, and gave numerous radio commentaries on the issue.

The media were also of critical importance in bringing public support to bear on the politicians (Figure 1). Again the academic literature provides some insight into the potential influence of the media in this way (for example, Davis and Rarick 1964; Grey and Brown 1970; Cook et al. 1983; Dearden 1985). Do letters to the editor and editorials help change political decisions? The evidence on this is contradictory, but one key factor does emerge, that letters and editorials influence the political agenda. In other words, they might not influence how politicians feel abut a certain issue, but they do influence the relative priorities of issues to think about. As South Moresby gained increasing prominence in the media, so it gained increasing priority on the political agenda.

As South Moresby gained increasing prominence in the media, so it gained increasing priority on the political agenda.

Political Motivation

Political motivation to have South Moresby preserved in a natural state was the main goal of the exercise. The previous components described would have been unnecessary had political support been forthcoming from the outset. Political support was required first in B.C., due to the provincial government having jurisdiction over land resources and decision-making, and only secondarily in Ottawa, mainly as a prod to the provincial government. Support at the provincial level was very slow in appearing. Politicians from the Social Credit party seemed unwilling to risk going against the business interests that constitute their support, and the generally more environmentally conscious NDP did not wish to alienate the unions. The core group met consistently with politicians of both parties to try and overcome this impasse.

Better success was achieved in lobbying Ottawa. Very strong support emerged from key individuals at an early stage in all parties. Jim Fulton, the NDP member for the area; Charles Cacia, Liberal, and former Minister of Environment; and John Fraser, PC, and current House Speaker all fit into this mold. Later and ultimately most important, as Minister, Tom MacMillan made South Moresby top of the agenda for Parks Canada. It is interesting to note that the bureaucratic structure within Parks Canada showed no such initiative, despite the fact that the parks system plan in Canada is barely half complete and that it is part of their mandate to complete the park system (Dearden and Gardner 1987). Many times had Moresby activists met with Parks Canada officials to no avail. It took political motivation from the top to influence agency agendas. MacMillan met frequently with representatives of the preservation lobby. He made it the top item of his own agenda and was ultimately able to persuade the Prime Minister in favor of the park and to devote substantial funds to help persuade the premier of B.C. The House of Commons unanimously passed a resolution on May 14, 1987, supporting the preservation of South Moresby.

Until the last moment it seemed that this national political support would have little sway in B.C. Despite the recommendations of the government-appointed Wilderness Advisory Committee to the contrary, Premier Bill van der Zalm announced that there would be no national park on the Islands. David Suzuki in his *Globe and Mail* Column (July 11, 1987) has this to say of the ploy:

> *And he made a clever strategic move with his initial announcement last month that the province would establish a park within which logging would continue. The ensuing massive response gave him the unequivocal public support for the park that he needed to back his decision to accept the federal offer.*

Whether it was a negotiating ploy or not is not known, but it certainly did draw a public response and again Suzuki credits national public support as the key factor in the battle: "Canadians should look in the mirror and congratulate themselves because it was their support that gave politicians the mandate they needed." (*Globe and Mail*, July 11, 1987).

Discussion and Conclusions

The fight to preserve South Moresby was a tough one, and one that clearly reached the general public across the nation. This public support was critical to the final outcome. The lessons learned by those involved in the issue were many and varied. Those listed below represent some personal observations.

1) Do not rely on a single strategy. Diversify to all sectors of the public and political parties.
2) Beware of established planning procedures and processes — they involve a lot of volunteer effort with little chance of success. Bureaucrats are often cushions between politicians and the public. Try to sit on the politicians directly, not the cushions.

Bureaucrats are often cushions between politicians and the public. Try to sit on the politicians directly, not the cushions.

3) Do not underestimate the strength of the public–politician relationship. Not only are the public needed to prod the politicians, but politicians look to the public to be prodded. Make your issue their issue.
4) The media is critical to point (3) above. Cultivate it, use it, but in a planned fashion.
5) Size of core group is critical to optimally devise and implement strategies. If the group is too small, the work burden becomes too large and the pool of ideas too small, but larger groups become too unwieldy.

   Several times official and unofficial coalitions of wilderness and environmental groups have appeared in B.C., but generally they spend more time bickering among themselves than attacking the issue. One of the most effective groups in western Canada in terms of public education in the wilderness field is the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, which is essentially a one-man operation.
6) Full-time commitment by a least some members of the core group is essential.
7) Large resources are required to mount public awareness campaigns. Seek allies. Ask them for money. Do not be afraid to call on international support for international-calibre issues.
8) Economic arguments are important to politicians. In the final analysis, South Moresby became a national park because the federal

government bought it for $206 million. This is more than the entire cost of the rest of the national parks in Canada put together, except for one.

In the final analysis, South Moresby became a national park because the federal government bought it for $206 million.

It is difficult to prescribe what should and should not be done in future issues. Conditions change, and the conditions of change change, both geographically and temporarily. The Franklin Dam case in Tasmania generated very similar public support as Moresby, yet the unique geographical and political situations meant that different strategies were used to some extent (see Sewell, Dumbrell, and Dearden 1987 for a more in-depth comparison). Temporal differences should also not be underestimated, for as Karl Popper, the famous philosopher of science, has observed in his *Poverty of Historicism*, history is a unique progression. A final comment from David Suzuki taken from his editorial in the *Globe and Mail*, July 11, 1987 will give this historical perspective, and also provide the closing lines for this paper.

> *What have we learned from all of this? South Moresby, particularly Windy Bay, became a symbol for all special wilderness areas. It became a crucial issue, because the outcome would indicate what Canadians value and how we see ourselves in relation to nature. The very act of debating the importance of wilderness, logging, tourism, fishing, native rights and mining, was part of an educational process going on around the world.*
>
> *..In the end, what South Moresby revealed was a profound clash between world views. The dominant one sees all of nature as a potential resource, of value only for its economic worth. But there is growing support for a different outlook that recognizes we are biological beings, who, in spite of science and technology, remain embedded in, and dependent on, nature. So we have to fight to keep nature intact and to try to bring ourselves into a balance with the environment. South Moresby could be a watershed that marks a shift towards this emerging world view.*

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Session Four

Getting the Message Out

Dealing With the Media

Linda Hughes

Linda Hughes is Editor of the *Edmonton Journal*.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm certainly honored to have been invited here today to speak to you. I know it is good practice to start a speech with a joke, but I couldn't dig up any good jokes about the environment. There are some people who think the Oldman River dam is a joke — but it may not be that funny.

In any case, the topic I've been asked to speak on is "Getting the Media Interested." I'd like to tell you that the media is very interested in environmental issues. But I'm not sure that that's an accurate generalization. The *Edmonton Journal* is interested in the environment. I can say that emphatically and without bias because the *Journal* has a full-time reporter assigned solely to the environment beat and we have had one for many years. But he is the only full-time environment reporter in Alberta. The *Vancouver Sun* has one, but there are no others in western Canada. Some newspapers have someone who is interested in the environment and gets the occasional assignment, but most cannot, or think they cannot, afford the luxury of one reporter to cover the area full time.

They all have political reporters and they certainly all have police reporters. And even small papers usually have education, city hall, and labor reporters. More important, if you look at most Canadian newspapers, you'll find, every day, dozens of political stories, and dozens of crime stories and many of them are a flash in the pan. But you won't regularly find many environment stories.

So why does the environment take such a low priority? Surely another break-in at a 7-11 store or another cabinet minister putting his foot in his mouth really doesn't compare in importance to the death of a lake, the spraying of some cancer-causing agent, or the future of non-renewable resources.

It's not that Canadians don't care about the environment. Polls indicate that most Canadians worry about the state of their environment and they see it as a major concern. A Decima poll, taken in 1984, showed 83 percent of Canadians said that protecting the environment is more important than keeping down prices. A poll the *Journal* did showed Albertans are overwhelmingly opposed to any resource or industrial development that will encroach on national parks.

The press is in the business of selling newspapers, so if Canadians are so concerned about the environment, why aren't environment stories flashed across the front pages every day? Well, I think it's a little like the nuclear arms issue — most Canadians have a deep and abiding concern about it, but it doesn't mean they want to read about it every day on the front page. Newspaper readers are concerned about the global economy, but it doesn't mean they'll read five stories a day on it.

The truth is that the break-in at the 7-11 store around the corner does threaten them in a much more immediate way than another road into an alpine meadow 300 miles away.

It's not as simple as saying people want to be entertained by the news — they would rather be titillated by a story about sex or crime or some heart-wrenching human interest story. Of course people like to read those stories, more than most of us like to admit, but I know that *Journal* readers also care about the environment. But the truth is that the break-in at the 7-11 store around the corner does threaten them in a much more immediate way than another road into an alpine meadow 300 miles away. That road is a threat to them — but in a much more distant way, only in the broad context.

And newspapers, like radio and television, which have to produce a huge news product every day, don't have the resources, in time or in space, to put every news story in context. Can you imagine what would happen if we tried? If every time there was a 7-11 store broken into and we tried to put the story in the broad context of urban crime? We'd have to detail all the other break-ins in the last year. For example, we'd have to talk about the impact on police forces, we'd have to talk about the impact on store owners, on home owners in the area, we'd have to give advice on personal safety. We'd have to talk about the impact on private patrol firms or door lock manufacturers, and we'd have to talk about how these break-ins have changed the way of life in the city.

I could go on and on, but I hope you see my point. We couldn't possibly do that and we don't need to. People understand the meaning of a simple crime story like that without having to put it in the broad context. But we need that context if the alpine road story is to have any meaning to most of our readers. We would need to talk about all the roads that had been built over previous years and all the sheep that had been affected and what it would mean to us that the sheep were affected.

Newspapers can do that sometimes and we do it. The *Journal* just completed an 11-page series on threatened wildlife that has had an enormous impact and a great deal of positive feedback from our readers. But we simply don't have the resources to do that very often. We're not a magazine; we're a daily newspaper. And that means most days environment stories, like all the other stories in our paper, have to be written in 20 inches or 15 inches or 10 inches. And it's hard, in 10 inches, to put complex environment stories in a context that makes them interesting and relevant.

But it is the mass media — radio, television, and daily newspapers — that you have to get interested in environment issues if you want to educate, to lobby, and to really make a difference. You know from great experience, often unhappy experience, that you can be right and have all the forces of truth and justice on your side, but if government or industry or some other institution doesn't want to listen, your only weapon is public opinion and you can't change public opinion. You can't get the public to react, to take action without the media.

So what should you do? The first important piece of advice is to get your facts right. The worst thing for a lobby group to do is get a reputation for inaccuracy, for blowing a lot of hot air. It's like crying wolf once too often. You lose your credibility and you're no help to the cause. When you decide to go public with an issue, tell the whole story. Tell as much as you reasonably can and that means the down side as well as the up. Your opponents will always be happy to trump it, the down side of your issue, and you're much better off to be up front and beat them to the punch.

When you decide to go public with an issue, tell the whole story.

Let me give you a simple example pulled out of thin air. Let's say you were lobbying to have certain pollution standards applied to an industrial plant. You talk to a reporter and discuss the environmental damage being done by this plant. You talk about how much it will cost to bring the plant up to standards and then you urge the government to act quickly. So the reporter then talks to the plant owners, who say, "well, you've got your facts wrong. We had an environmental impact study done a year or two ago which showed that we can't be pinpointed as the cause of this air pollution, and in any case, we have a 15-year plan to phase in improvements, all approved by the government."

All of a sudden, the story doesn't seem that great — it's a short "he said, she said" piece and the average reader isn't particularly convinced either way. A good reporter should have phoned you back to get your reaction to the plant owner's reaction, but there might not be time or he or she might not be that interested. So you would have been better off to tell the reporter in the first place about the environmental study, about the 15-year plan, and at that point give the evidence as to why the study wasn't valid or the 15-year plan simply isn't good enough. What I'm saying is give all the facts, all the pros and all the cons, and then argue your case. You'll be more credible and more successful.

I was asked to address the question of whether the media should be dealt with formally or informally. I think you have to pick your spots. Frankly, a newspaper or a radio or TV station will give your story bigger play if it has it exclusively — if they think no one else has the story. But if you've got a dynamite report that you really feel is important front-page-style news, you should probably have a press conference and invite as many reporters as you can. But if the story you have to tell is a step down from that, you might want to give it directly to a good reporter you trust — Dave Cooper is the name, of course, that springs to mind — because if it's what we used to call a "scoop," an exclusive story, the newspaper or station you give it to might give it better play. The reporter will be more interested if it's his own story rather than something every radio station in town has had on the news all day. Again, pick your spots. If it's a story about Fort McMurray, don't leak it to a *Lethbridge Herald* reporter. But being in the Fort McMurray newspaper may not be enough. If the story involves the government it should be in the Edmonton media as well.

Establishing a good, informal relationship with members of the media works to the benefit of both sides, unquestionably. But because there aren't a lot of environment reporters, I don't think you can rely on that. Since most radio and TV stations and many newspapers don't have environment reporters who generate their own assignments, you have to get to the editors and the assignment people. That means using the more formal channels of press releases and news conferences. But you must understand that assignment editors have an incredible amount of paper passed over their desks every day and simply mailing out releases or reports or calling conferences may not be enough to get attention. If it's important to you, follow it up with a phone call directly to the editor or assignment person or reporter involved.

The ECA, for example, sends out, I believe, agendas for its public advisory committee meetings. An environment reporter can look at those agendas and know where there are interesting items. But a radio station, let's say, which doesn't have a regular reporter on the environment beat, or perhaps even a regular assignment editor, isn't necessarily going to be able to interpret the agenda. So you have to give them some help. Flag any particularly interesting items. Phone the editors and, again, pick your spots.

We are not simply a forum for lobby groups.

The major criticism levelled at the media is that we are quick-hit artists, the one-day wonders. We like short, snappy stories about PCB spills much more than long, in-depth analyses of non-renewable resource strategies. I guess that's true and I suppose it's a fair criticism as far as it goes. But the fact is that we are in the news business and we are daily journalists. We make no apologies for that. We are not simply a forum for lobby groups. Our mission is to tell our readers as much as possible about the world and the community around them. There is a lot of competition for people's time and attention and if we don't present the news, the background, the analysis in an interesting, readable way, we won't capture those readers. We can write all the important stories in the world, but if people don't read them it won't do much good.

Often lobby groups, whether in the environment, labor, or education, want us to write stories that would really only interest other environmentalists, labor leaders, or educators. If we're going to do our job, and help your cause along the way, we have to write for people who don't always even know that they should be interested.

Often lobby groups, whether in the environment, labor, or education, want us to write stories that would really only interest other environmentalists, labor leaders, or educators.

And we have to be as unbiased as we can. I think often, and quite naturally, environment reporters tend to be people interested in the environment and therefore might be seen, by some, to have built-in biases. We have to guard against that. Our readers aren't stupid. Sometimes we underestimate them, and they can see biases and unfairness in a story as easily as they can the black and white on the page. So don't expect a reporter to follow "your slant" on a story. Just expect him to be fair and accurate. That's all you can hope for and that's all you should want.

I know sometimes environmental groups and government agencies are really disappointed about the coverage they get. They work for two and a half years on a project that affects the very survival of our society. They come out with a report entitled something like "Environmental Interface: A Multi-Sectoral Approach to Integrated Implementation, Utilization, and Infrastructure." They hold a big press conference and hand out the full eight-volume report. And the next day, they are understandably upset when the story about a monkey's sex-change operation is on the front page and they can't find any mention of their report.

I sympathize with them, but the sad fact is that just because something is important doesn't make it interesting. Newspapers have a responsibility to inform and they would be remiss, in this case, if they didn't write a story about this very monumental report. But these things are usually incredibly bureaucratic, bogged down in language that normal people never use, and they don't really relate to people's lives. If you have information you want to get out to the public, if you have a story that's important, you have to make it relevant to people's lives. You have to put a human face on it, you have to tell them why they should care about it. Put it into a context that has meaning.

If you have information you want to get out to the public, if you have a story that's important, you have to make it relevant to people's lives.

All this means that you have to help us. You are the people with access to information. Spread it around. We depend on you. Sometimes I think people think reporters somehow get information by osmosis. We're supposed to know what's happening in the world, but we only know what people tell us. Err on the side of sending out too many press releases, too many reports.

If you think it might be a story, but you're not sure, phone a reporter, let them decide.

Err on the side of sending out too many press releases, too many reports.

Another piece of advice: if you see something in a newspaper or hear it on the radio or TV and you think we've made a mistake or we're wrong or we haven't understood the issue, phone us. Tell us about it. Newspapers and the media in general are far more accessible than you may realize. If you don't like what you see in a newspaper, for example, phone the reporter and talk to them about it. If you don't get satisfaction, phone their boss. At the *Journal*, you can phone the Ombudsman or you can phone the editor. You're not doing your job if you allow misinformation to go unchallenged.

So, make contact with the media. Provide them with lots of information, accurate information, information that has a context, a human side. That's how you get your message out.

I hope this has been of some help. Thank you for listening.

Questions

Q. Have you considered putting in an environment column, a consistent day-to-day environment column? It's got enough profile. Why not?

A. I don't think that we would not consider that. Most of our columns — our political and business columns — are three times a week. A three-times-a-week environment column? Sure, I would look at it. I wouldn't be opposed to the idea.

Q. I wonder if you could comment on this: sometimes we skip the reporter and write the material ourselves. I'm talking about letters to the editor. I wonder if you think letters to the editor are a good way to publicize environmental issues. These issues are not the 24-hour, scintillating type of issues. Are letters to the editor a good method and do you have any suggestions for writing a letter that will get into the letters to the editor column?

A. First of all, I think that letters are really well read. You know, we do surveys occasionally about what people read and they don't always tell us the truth. That's something I found out. People say, well, I always read the editorial page or I always read in-depth analysis. I think they often read Ann Landers first. But that's what they tell us. And they do tell us that they read the letter space. It's very well read. I think it's better read than the sports page. So I think it's an excellent forum, because people who are not interested in those subjects see that page as a forum throughout and we like to encourage it.

To get your letter in: I think one problem is to look at the length of letter. Look at the longest letter you've seen us print and write for that length. People try for a 15-page letter and that's a problem. I think being direct and to the point is good. I think sometimes letter writers spend a lot of time referring back to another letter or even an editorial that might help make your argument. It might be the point, but I don't think that serves you well. Just state your views in a clear, precise way.

Q. I wasn't here when you started your talk, but I believe you made mention of Mr. Dave Cooper, an environmental writer from the *Edmonton Journal*. Now, it seems to me in my limited reading of Mr. Cooper's writing — I don't know whether he's here today or not — he's very interested in getting his own personal feelings and ideas across on environmental issues. And I would suggest to you that a writer who does that sort of mitigates the interest that I, as a person in the field who may or may not agree with him, [would have], and the confidence that I would have in going to him and talking about an issue when he's so up-front with his own personal ideas on how he feels about an issue. Could you comment on that, please?

A. I'm not sure that I would accept that. This isn't necessarily the best forum for this, but I would be happy to talk to you about it, with some examples, because I think it is only with examples we can discuss that. As an environment reporter, much of what he does is straight reporting in the sense of the she said, he said, sort of thing. But also he does more feature writing, and it may be that in feature writing there's a feeling that it is more personal. Certainly, in some of his writing he's gone to places that provide environmental issues and written them in a more featured way. But I think he's a fair reporter; I don't think he's biased. It would be more helpful if you wanted to show me examples.

Q. You made a statement that, if an article is inaccurate or unfair, we should phone the reporter and tell him about it. But, given what you also said about economic and time pressures for the reporter, can we expect that any follow-up will be done, other than some little correction notice that nobody can see and nobody can read?

A. Well, I think that if there is just straight factual error, then absolutely it's always our policy — and I think most newspapers are the same — to do a correction on A2. That's traditionally where they are.

People say, well, maybe that's not going to get read as much. If it's a front-page story, then being on A2 is less play or not as good play. But other than that, for everywhere else in the paper, it's better play. I don't know what else you can do other than just simply correct it.

If it's more than that, if you feel that they haven't taken the right side or seen another side, then obviously what you really want done is another story. And, yes, if we have the time and the resources to do that, particularly if we're wrong. You might not have any success with the reporter, who might be defensive about it, and that's why you might have to call the editor or in the case of the *Journal* and the *Herald*, there is an ombudsman who tries to mediate in those kinds of things.

Q. You commented earlier about selecting stories. I know that probably a lot of people in the room are aware of stories that reportedly have been prepared on environmental issues, and nothing ever comes of it. They do the interviews and the story gets caught by the editor, who makes the decisions to not run it. Or it's been edited, perhaps by someone who didn't do the research or collect the information, so that what sometimes appears in the final edition is not quite the way it came out in the interview or the discussion. I was wondering who makes those kinds of decisions. Is it one person who makes the decision to run a story or is it a group of people? It seems to me at that point in the process there is a lot of influence exerted on what eventually gets out, even before the public has a chance to form its opinion. I wonder if you would comment on that selection process.

A. There are a lot of people involved, because it's a fairly complex organization. It's a big newspaper that has to be put out in a very small amount of time. Deadlines are very tight on a daily operation. With a small newspaper, a weekly even more so, the reporter writes it and it's just one editor and it goes in the paper. It's a much smoother process.

But in the big newspapers, because of the size — if I could run through it quickly — an environment reporter would either find it or self-initiate it, so that's how it would get started. He writes the story, hands it in to the city desk. The city desk consists of the city editor and about four or five assistant city editors, so probably at least two people on the desk. It would vary. If it was a really important story, the city editor wouldn't get it at all. Most likely an assistant city editor who edits copy would edit it. Then it is put in a bit of a pile that day with all the stories that are going in the paper. Another editor decides what page it goes on, then a copy editor goes through it for rough copy editing. A headline is written on it maybe by somebody else, then there is a final check on it before it gets set to go upstairs.

I should back track a little bit. There is a daily news meeting every day at four o'clock where the world editor, Canada editor, sports, business — all those editors present their lineups. Obviously, the biggest lineup is the city story. Well, that story would have been mentioned at a news meeting, attended by myself sometimes, but certainly always a managing editor, an assistant managing editor, and all the city editors, and a decision is made there about the importance of the story. You might decide there that it's a page-one story or you might decide to put it in the B section somewhere. There are an awful lot of influences.

Again, I think if the story isn't edited properly, if you feel that is the case, then tell us about it. I think people often think these things are very conspiratorial, and they're quite the contrary. It's just that there were four stories on that page. This one ran longer. They had to cut out the last three paragraphs and it was your quote. Nobody was trying to keep you out of the story, but you've got so many people touching it.

Also, news changes during the night. Your story might be plugged for the front page, and the Sinc Stevens report comes down or there's a fire or something, and it gets bumped off. Sometimes you would think, if it got bumped off the front page, it would go to the city front page. By rights it should, but that page is already gone. So it ends up on a back page and all of a sudden you say, now, that's not very good news judgement. Well, in a way, it wasn't, but sometimes circumstances dictate it. Sorry that was so long-winded.

Q. [inaudible question relating to advertisements increasing the size of the paper.]

A. Well, I would say that is a complex subject. But we are a business and we try to provide what people want to buy. It seems to us that that is what people want to buy. If we came out as a 10-page newspaper every day, I think a lot of people would buy a lot of other newspapers and all our advertisers would go to other newspapers and I wouldn't have a job. It's very simple.

Q. I've recently been educated to an interesting idea for most of the people in this room, I think, by some friends in Calgary. I've noticed that the *Calgary Herald* will accept articles that are well written, stuff from the general public. They'll put them on a features page and very often they go on a page near the editorial page. They get very good public coverage. I think it is called the spotlight feature. I imagine the *Edmonton Journal* does that as well. I think maybe our audience doesn't realize that they can, if they write well, and they can write a good story that gives perhaps a personal background to an environmental event or something they live with every day, something they have expertise in, they can submit it and be a spotlight feature. Do you have a budget for that and do you pay people for that or is it a volunteer contribution?

A. I guess it varies. But generally we would pay people. I think people would often be surprised to find out how little freelancers get paid. Maybe you are aware of that, but $50, $100. It's not very high. I wouldn't do it for the money, but you might want to do it to get your message across. I think the tough part about that is that most people can't write in newspaper style. I'm not saying newspaper style is the best style, but it's what our readers want in a newspaper.

Q. This is a commendation. You've had the series on survivors in the *Edmonton Journal* for the past 11 days or so, and I would commend you on that. It's popularizing information and I think only by doing that can we get the support that we need for some of the issues.

A. Thank you very much.

Q. [inaudible question]

A. No. Again, I just have to stress that anybody who has a problem has got to tell us. Often I think people just don't like what is written. It is a lot easier to not confront the story, not confront the reporter, not confront the newspaper and discuss it. It's a lot easier to just say to the people around you that it's hogwash.

But the other thing I would say is, of course we make mistakes all the time. But more important than that, I think everybody views the world differently. Right now, if everybody in this room went out and wrote a news story about this meeting, or my talk, I'll tell you, you would get a vast variety of opinions about what happened.

A much better example is a car accident. Those are the kinds of things we write about. We don't write generally about things that are not controversial. We write about issues where there is conflict, controversy, a lot of the time. So take the car accident. Two people in a parking lot hit each other. We get each of the drivers and a passerby to write a story about what happened. It's not that what those people will write will be wrong. That's not the point. It's not that they'll try to distort it. It's not that they will lie, not that they won't tell the truth, but their observation is very different. Reporters face this. They go and do a story about a coup and they observe. And sometimes they may not be right about what they observe, and generally they bring a perspective which is absolutely different from the principals' perspective, but it isn't necessarily wrong.

Q. [inaudible question]

A. I'm getting booted off the stage here, but I would just say the partnership that exists is between a newspaper and its readers, you know, and that's where the partnership has to exist. We have to do a good job in order to satisfy our readers and that's what is important — satisfying our readers.

Dealing With Politicians

Senator Herb Sparrow

Senator Sparrow is a member of the Senate of Canada. He is Chairman of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry.

First of all, let me tell you how pleased I am to be with you. My apologies to those people who've heard me speak before. But it's not really a true apology because, although the subject matter is not soil degradation, I'm going to make you suffer through some of that this morning. I have a bit of a captive audience and I want to talk about that.

Thank goodness Linda Hughes was here this morning. Just think of the abuse politicians would take if we couldn't blame the newspapers for all of these things.

This morning, the subject matter is dealing with politicians. The first question anyone asks is, well, who wants to deal with politicians? The answer is, no one, but many times we have to deal with politicians, with decision makers, whether they be on a municipal, provincial, or federal level. We have to deal with them to get changes in society.

We, as a society throughout the last few years — exaggerated the last year — have given up our control of society, the controls we had ourselves, in our small communities, and with the churches, to look after our welfare. Now we find we're wrestling to get some of that control back to ourselves, and we're having difficulty. So we have to deal with those politicians, whether we like to or not.

We're finding that the very survival of our future, and that of our children, be it soil degradation, or water, or air, is going to depend on us. In meetings such as this, we learn, and we go out and talk to the general public. We have found that, in giving up the controls we had on society, those controls we've put in the hands of other people are many times not working. We can see the society around us deteriorating very, very rapidly, be it from the environment or social issues. Let me just tell you this: you can always tell a politician, but so many times you can't tell him anything. I suppose I might happen to be one of those.

Let me tell you as well that, when we're talking about issues, the attention span of a politician is very, very short. We all know that: the issue today might be free trade, and it's the most crucial issue facing the nation. But tomorrow morning it's the Sinclair Stevens affair. It's capturing the headlines in the newspapers and it becomes an issue of that day. If it's not that, then it's immigration. Those other issues are set aside. Or it's pharmaceutical billing, all of those things that span into the future. And we get caught up in that. We follow them and our time span then becomes very short. So when we're talking about environmental issues or soil degradation, we have to remember we have to keep talking about it. We have to be talking about it, day after day after day, and be aware of that short time span of those people who are decision makers.

We must always remember what our goals are — not where we're being led on political issues. When we develop the cause that we're going to put forward, we can't waver.

What must we do, then, when we're dealing with politicians? First of all, we must learn our subject well. Determine what that subject is. We have groups in society who must talk about the individual issues and learn that subject well. Then we must go out and get the widest possible public support for that issue, be it abortion, be it free trade — whatever it is, we must be sure that we know what we're talking about as much as possible and get the support from and within the public.

We must analyze what is being said. We're the ones who must be critics. When we read something, it must force us to think that, no longer is a view the true fact just because I read it in the newspaper or I saw it on television. That is not the fact anymore. This is not to be critical of those media. Let's realize what they're doing and be smarter than they are. Analyze the facts of what is happening to us. The politicians may not say what you expect. We have to use what our hearts and our minds tell us as well.

Let's talk, then, about what we do. When we have a cause, we must make the public aware. But then we must make the public think — public thinking at every opportunity we can get, through the press, house parties, anything. We must get at those grass-roots people. We must prepare for and try to get the attention of the press, and engage them in a forthright manner on some of these issues.

We have to have direct contact with the policy makers. We have to contact our politicians, be they urban or rural, federal or provincial. You must get to know those people, regardless of their political thinking. And you must talk to them in person on the issue every chance you get. You must call them on the telephone. You must write them letters, not form letters, not telegrams, or anything like that. If I, or the prime minister of this country, or any cabinet minister, gets a dozen personal letters on an issue, let me tell you, that dozen is enough. It does not take a thousand personal letters. It takes a dozen, two to himself personally. And if you can get a total of 12 persons interested, then it's 12 letters. That's all it takes. So don't discount this personal contact, because it does work. Form letters, as I mentioned, no.

If I, or the prime minister of this country, or any cabinet minister, gets a dozen personal letters on an issue, let me tell you, that dozen is enough.

Attend political meetings. You may not want to be seen at the NDP meeting — no, that's me who doesn't want to be seen there — but you might have somebody in your association who is a member of that group. Have him informed on your cause and have him ask those questions and make those statements at political meetings. It's crucial. Try to get your people to get the issues on the platform of political parties when elections are coming, if you have a cause. We did it with the book, the study on soil conservation in Canada, *Soil at Risk*, before that last election. We did get it on the platform of the political party by pressure. It made great hay and gave us the impetus to carry on. So do that. Deal with your politicians on a one-to-one basis. Remember this: they're not a bit smarter than you are. I won't say they might be dumber — let's assume that we're on an equal basis with the rest of you.

The question was asked, is it better to have organizations deal with the political process, or individuals? The answer to that, of course, is both. But I believe that the individual representation to a politician, backed up by an organization, is far better than the representation by the organization backed up by individuals. When you can go as an individual and make your cause known and say, this cause is backed up by the Environment Council, the Advisory Groups to that Council, or it's backed up by the Rotary Club, or whatever, then that makes the case much stronger than if the organization was to go. That appears many times to be just do-gooders.

Let's talk about when we see this is not entirely working. You have to repeat, repeat, repeat. I'm going to mention that further. You must think the cause is great enough, and you must use any forum you can. I talked about the individual contact, but then you use delegation contact. You use a delegation of two or three or a hundred, whatever you can mobilize, to your politician, to your prime minister, to your local government, whomever. You can go to the extent, and I'm not much for it, but sometimes for the cause you have to go to sit-ins. I don't like it, and neither do you, but you have to go to public demonstrations sometimes. I don't mean destructive sit-ins or disruptive public demonstrations. I don't like tractors on the highway holding up the traffic. You can have non-disruptive demonstrations that bring that cause forward to the public as a whole, through the press. It's a matter of repeat, repeat, repeat.

Remember this: government politicians react. They don't normally act.

You know the old story: if you repeat a lie long enough people begin to believe it, and that of course is what dictators do. Well, you have to do the same thing with the truth: you have to repeat it, and repeat it, and repeat it, before people really realize that it is, in fact, the truth. When I apologize to those who've heard me speak before, that is sort of out of the corner of my mouth, because I don't really want to apologize for repeating the statements I make about those causes. Remember this: government politicians react. They don't normally act. They react to circumstances and to pressure by people. That's what we always have to be aware of. They react. Why is a Sinclair Stevens an issue today? It's because it's a political game. It is not going to help the great cause they said [it would]. It might help with legislation or conflict of interest and so on, and there's nothing wrong with that. But it's not the issue. We have to be aware of that. We have to make sure that we don't get carried by the political issue of the day.

Let me talk to you now about soil degradation. I want to tell you that soil degradation in this country is a serious problem requiring national attention. I am talking today to a converted group of people who are aware of the environmental problems in Alberta, so I am not going to say, as a supposed expert, "I know what your problems are; I have the solutions to your problem." Because, first of all, I don't know the problems as well as you do, and I don't know the solutions as well as you.

My job, as I see it, is to tell you that whatever problems you have, you're not alone. Those problems exist all across this nation, in fact, basically, in every agricultural community in the world. Some countries are much worse than we are; some countries somewhat better. Our soils are at risk; our future is eroding. The issue of the day in this nation is soil degradation. Canada is facing the most serious agricultural crisis in its history. Unless action is taken quickly, this country will lose a major portion of its agricultural capabilities.

The issue of the day in this nation is soil degradation.

The Soil Conservation Society of America made this statement to the Senate Committee, "soil erosion may well be the most underrated, yet the most damaging natural resource problem of the eighties. Must we wait for crisis conditions before action is taken to safeguard our scarce and dwindling soil resource base?" In the book, *Will The Bounty End?*, written by Gary Fairbairn and published by the Agricultural Institute of Canada, it states — and might I say that this is an excellent publication for students of soil conservation and soil degradation — "Canada may be headed toward the greatest environmental disaster in its history, a disaster that would prove harmful economic effects unparalleled since the depression. The threat is nothing less than the destruction of the land's current capacity to continue producing food." We live by the soil and die by the soil.

Let's talk about soil degradation and soil conservation in Canada. You are aware of the problems you have, and you may solve them in Alberta or your part of the country. You may just do it. But what good is it to Canada if you save your agricultural productive capacity, and we let the rest of the country go down the drain? What good is it if we save the soils of western Canada and we lose Ontario, Quebec, the Atlantic provinces, British Columbia? In fact, what good is it from the global aspect, if all of Canada saves its soil, but the rest of the world loses theirs, as they are so rapidly in Asia and Africa, Australia, and the United States today? We can't possibly feed the [world]. We will be lucky, at the rate our soil is deteriorating, to be able to feed ourselves 30 to 40 years down the line.

Let me tell you that I've seen my job on soil conservation. It's talking, making the public aware, making the politicians aware. It's to try to work with you and with groups to find, not the solution, because we'll never find a solution to soil degradation, but to find better methods of managing the soils of this nation. I see it as my job, with you, to mobilize money, manpower, and technology into a driving force for soil conservation in Canada. When I tell you the most serious crisis facing the Canadian agricultural industry, in fact all Canadians, is soil degradation, you and other listeners say, it's not true; the most serious crisis facing the agriculture industry is the economic situation. Well, I'm on the same wave length as you; it is very serious. The economic crisis is with us in almost all facets of agriculture across the country. But that, hopefully, is only a temporary phenomenon that we hope would only last a year or two or three. The underlying, most serious crisis is soil degradation, that deterioration of our future all across this nation.

Let me tell you about the studies made on conservation and soil degradation. The book, *Soil at Risk,* and the Science Council of Canada, Agriculture Institute of Canada, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, all of those groups have been trying in the last two or three years to bring soil degradation to the public's awareness. I have found in my travels that there's a great deal of knowledge out there about soil degradation, among you people, the soil scientists, the agrologists, farmers, farm organizations. But there's a great deal of frustration among the people who know something about it, because they see what's happening, and yet they feel that so little is being done about those issues.

[A constituent said,] how can you check where that cause is going? I said I thought awareness had come to a plateau in the last two or three years. The issue was escalating in awareness, because meetings such as yours were talking about it year after year. All of a sudden, in the last six months, it seems to have reached a plateau. I said, "Why would that happen?" He said, "It's because of politics. Now it's put forward so far that you have to make a political decision and it stops there." It stops because we've become broad enough; everybody seems to be aware of it. But now what do you have to do? You have to spend the bucks, maybe you have to tramp on somebody's toes, you have to bring in some legislation that might control the use of farmland. Maybe you have to control urban expansion. So at that point, the decision makers back off. I think that we are at that plateau now.

Now we've come to that plateau and we've got to look at, not an entirely different plan, but a new slant. I can see it in every province, including your own, this bit of a barrier that's coming into place on these issues. We have the technology in the world to save millions and millions of tonnes of topsoil every year, if we could get this technology used in the areas where it is required. We need different farming practices, different attitudes about how we farm that land.

We have the technology in the world to save millions and millions of tonnes of topsoil every year, if we could get this technology used in the areas where it is required.

In the last several years, the cost of production was so high and returns so low to the agricultural industry that, although each farmer wants to be a good steward of the soil, in many instances he can't afford to be one. He wants to be, but he can't afford to be. If that is the case, then that's what we have to look at. Because the land is not owned by the farmer; the land is owned by generations of people and that's who has to pay the cost.

We have to start paying that cost now, because the agricultural community can't do it. We give the farmer a paper that says this is your title to that land; you own it. We forget, though, that he is only there for 30 or 40 years and then he is gone. Did he really own that land? Does he really have the right to destroy it? Of course, the answer, if you look at it, is no. He doesn't, because he doesn't really have it. That piece of paper doesn't really give him the sole right to do as he pleases with that land. That is what we have to look at.

We have to say to the consuming public, all of them, that it is your land and it's your responsibility and it's your cost if you want to conserve that soil, that most precious natural resource, for the future generations of this country. We control the urban development, we control the color of the homes, the building materials that go into the urban communities, but many times we let the agricultural community do what they want. There are such upsetting things, of course, as when the Department of National Defense wants to go into some of your best ranch land, and it's a federal government agency so they'll go. The provincial government says, "Well, we don't own the land. It's privately owned land and it's the federal government." Nobody accepts the responsibility for who that land really belongs to. Do we let those industries and those governments go in and destroy that land?

I want to tell you that soil degradation affects every agricultural community in this nation. They are affected by almost every form of degradation. I'm talking about erosion by wind and by water. I'm talking about acidification of those soils, compaction of those soils, loss of organic matter of those soils, the devastating effects of mining and oil development, of roads and highways, gas lines, pipelines, and the devastating effects of urban encroachment upon our most precious resource.

We can talk all we want about the youth being our most precious national resource or our older people being our most precious national resource — none of those are. It is the soils of this nation that are our most precious national resource. If, in the future, we can't feed our own young people or our older people — and not very far in the future — then what do you say is our most precious national resource? Well, let's start saying it now. Let's start talking to our decision makers about this aspect.

I forgot salinization. Salinization affects about 50 percent of the soils in western Canada. The problems that it is creating are increasing 10 percent per year. When we talk about the Atlantic provinces, we talk about all of those forms of degradation excepting salinization. We talk about them having started out in their agricultural industry a little over 100 years ago with 15 to 18 inches of topsoil. Now, the average depth of the topsoil in that part of the nation is six inches. It didn't take us 130 years to lose that; it took us the last 30 or 40 years. If we don't do something to keep cover crops, to keep the cropping system and the cultivation system proper in that country, we'll have a nonviable agricultural industry there in 30 to 40 years. We can't afford, as a nation, to lose that.

Now I'll talk to you about the province of Quebec, about the monoculture, the continuous cropping of one crop, about leaving that land black in the fall, black in the winter, black in the spring, so subject to heavy rainfalls and snowfalls that melt and just take that fragile soil and its organic matter, and wash it into the lakes and the rivers and streams and the low-lying areas and eventually into the oceans, and it's lost forever. That's happening in the Atlantic provinces, in Quebec, in Ontario, and certainly in British Columbia. All of those forms of degradation are eating away at the very future of this nation.

If I came to you today and you said, "Look, we've got a bit of a problem here; we are losing some soil by wind erosion, but that's the only problem we've got," well, we could kind of zero in and probably watch that very carefully and control it. But when I bring you all of these aspects, the cancers that are eating away, then you can see that it is a global problem. It's a problem we all have to work at, and work at very seriously.

Why do we allow the urban development in every province to take away our most precious national resource?

Why do we allow the urban development in every province to take away our most precious national resource? Why do we let the Mirabel Airport, the Pearson Airport, [inaudible] take up 75,000 acres of our best farmland? Why do we let the Ford Motor plant go into St. Thomas, Ontario and take 1,500 acres of the best farmland in that province? The new General Motors Suzuki plant in Tilsonburg, Ontario: why do we allow them to take 760 acres of our best farmland when they could get by with 50 acres? Why? Because it's dirt cheap. It's the bottom of the totem pole of expansion in this nation. Industry says that the cheapest part of our investment is the land. Let's pick it up because it's dirt cheap and we don't know what the future holds.

When I was at the Tilsonburg plant, they got the big cat in and loaders and they're building mounds and parking lots, and they're destroying, not the full 760 acres, but probably 200 acres of that land right at the moment. Why do we allow them to go on the best farmland when they could go 30 miles further out to sub-marginal land? That's happening in your province and it's happening in mine. It's happening in every other province.

If it was only urban expansion, we could perhaps control that, but we must control all of those aspects at once. In B.C., only 4 percent of that beautiful province is suitable for any agriculture. They're losing that land just phenomenally, by erosion and by the encroachment of the urban communities onto those valleys. Look at what's happening in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. We're losing in your province and mine, millions and millions of tonnes of our most precious national resource every spring, every year, through wind erosion. Somewhere it's reported that we're losing three-quarters of an inch of topsoil in a three-day wind storm in your province and in my province of Saskatchewan. If you only have three or four or five inches of topsoil, how can you afford to lose three-quarters of it in two or three days? You can't, and expect to have a viable agricultural industry 30 years down the line.

If we destroy the soil, the soil will destroy us.

The salinization in the province, the cultivation practices, the summerfallow practices — there are so many issues involved that we have to look at. It's your job and mine to look at them and bring them to the attention of the people of this nation. Let us not forget that if we destroy the soil, the soil will destroy us. Man belongs to the soil. The soil does not belong to man.

I'm glad you're here to give me this chance to talk to you. Thank you very much.

Questions

Q. One comment before we leave soil degradation to return to our agenda: it's not just agricultural soils we're losing; it's forest soils; it's alpine meadow soils. We're losing all our soils. It's easy to see why we need agricultural soils. It's harder to convince people we need forest soils, alpine meadow soils, but we do. It's been drawn to my attention by the fact that we now actually have two opposition parties in this province — a novelty. Shortly after this miracle occurred, these people started allowing themselves to be agitated on their shadow briefs. We're willing to talk to anybody who will listen about our environmental concerns, naturally. We were especially enthusiastic in this case because there is always the possibility of getting a useful, well-informed, well-backgrounded question asked, which, if it does nothing else, usually gets these feelings into the newspaper — another way of reminding both public and politicians that that issue exists.

One of these people said to me, look, we don't want you talking to the other opposition party. If you're going to talk to them, we're not going to stick around and be backgrounded, because what is the good if we go to all the work of getting it backgrounded and we're working our way up to asking a really good question on your subject and the day before we're ready they pop up and ask it. I'm not about to accept his limitation. I'm going to keep on trying to talk to him and I'm also going to keep on trying to talk to everybody else in sight including the other opposition party. But I wonder if you'd give me any advice about how to deal with that when I do talk to him.

A. I guess it depends on what you're planning. [inaudible] so you have to be careful of that. If you're going to plan a program, then plan it. I talked about dealing in platforms. If you're going to talk, when an election is coming and you've got an issue, then get through to all of those political parties and get it in their platforms if you can. If you're dealing with the government of the day and you're making progress with the government of the day, then I don't think you muddy the waters by dealing with the opposition at the same time. If you find that you're not making progress, then you have to use any method you can. You have to use a political embarrassment; you have to use the opposition party to ask the question in the house, sure. You have to do that. But you plan ahead. And that's the way to it. You accomplish very little by ever embarrassing anybody into doing something, but you have to make them aware that the issue exists and that you have other people behind you. And if they don't act, then of course it's their own problem.

Q. I have two questions, but they're related so maybe you can answer them together. Many times when we have a petition to be made, it's to a politician in Ottawa. I sometimes wonder if I wouldn't be more effective if I could write my letter to the *Ottawa Citizen* instead of the *Calgary Herald.* The other question, which is sort of related, is, how am I most effective: if I continue to write letters on all different kinds of topics so that the politician might get 10 letters of mine throughout a year, or should I just talk about the two or three that are most important? Maybe they get tired of hearing the same thing and they say, why bother, I'll have another letter next week.

A. I think it's more effective if you wrote 10 letters about the same subject area. There's always the danger of the idea about a do-gooder out there, you know. You need to be aware of that. But 10 letters on a subject will be effective especially if you have 10 other people there. You're right about the papers. If you get it in the *Globe and Mail*, say, or the *Ottawa Citizen* — there's no question about it, the politicians in the city of Edmonton think everything revolves around them. If he gets printed in the *Edmonton Journal*, that's great. Or if he gets on the television in Question Period. The same is true in Ottawa. They pick up the Toronto papers, the *Globe and Mail*.

Q. Like Moresby.

A. Yes, that did get fair coverage. That is correct. And it worked.

Q. I don't believe there is a man alive who could do more in the immediate future than you can to pull a bureaucracy together. I was surprised you didn't mention that you are a long ways along with a committee.

The bureaucracy will not allow you, Sir, to fulfill your goal. As a conservation farmer, I will farm out of the bank for one year. If the bureaucracy will not allow you or somebody to be the final boss on soil degradation, then I've got two choices: either sell out to the Hutterites or start mining my soil. Well, I'm not going to do either one. I don't know what I'm going to do.

But what I'm saying, we've got conservation farmers who've gone all the way. Some of us have had to back off. We think we know what we're doing. We don't always know how to do it. But if the bureaucracy will not allow some changes — we're not asking for money. We're asking for taxation changes. We're asking for quota changes. Let's quit, as farmers, crying the blues. There are things we can do ourselves, but the bureaucracy will not allow it.

I called a meeting after doing homework for two years. I had 100 farmers show up the first night. We signed 80 of them up. Within six months, we had 160 farmers. I went into Saskatchewan. I started the Wheatland Conservation District. They have taken off and they have spread to, I'm sure, 600 farmers now. We have stayed at 160 for probably a year and a half. I make no effort to sell memberships any more. They're printing a thousand sheets of memberships for my organization, Dryland Salinity Control Association, here in Edmonton. I have no faith that we're going to pick up hardly any members with these until soil is a provincial jurisdiction.

In Saskatchewan, they had [inaudible] with the federal government. Those farmers are getting millions of dollars and they deserve even more than they're getting. I'm writing saying, give them more. Manitoba's getting millions of dollars.

I have a letter from Mr. Elzinga that came to our organization here, the Environment Council of Alberta, stating that they have been doing something — I have Mr. Wiseman's letter too — he said, we put $120,000 into Alberta and they put it through the service boards. The federal government will not put new [inaudible] into Alberta until they will allow the farmer organizations to take the lead, and this is not so in the province of Alberta as it is in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. So why did I get an organization started and stalled at 160 members? I'm not even trying to sell applications any more. Because they've got to crack the bureaucracy before we can go for it.

And, Sir, I know that you're neglecting your health. I know you're neglecting your family. But I tell you one thing. You'll go to your grave leaving a better world than it would have been if you hadn't been here.

A. Thank you very much. I just hope there will be some topsoil to put over my grave when I go.

Q. I wonder what's wrong with being a do-gooder. What I really would like to ask is if you have an opinion on acceleration of soil salinization under irrigation practices?

A. The problem of salinization because of irrigation can be rampant. It's rampant now in the province and the western United States, where they have said that there is lots of water, so just pour it on. What they're doing now, they are finding that the seepage of that salt is destroying the lakes, the rivers, the streams in the western area and the California area. It's true there, and it's happening, of course, in our own province of Saskatchewan where, hopefully, there's some change being made. PFRA do a great job. I'm a great promoter of PFRA because they do a lot of great work. But when they went into irrigation projects — and hopefully, they are stopping now — they would say, just set your irrigation system to do this — put on 15 inches. It doesn't matter whether it rains, just put it on and let it go. So that you were always putting on more than the actual crop could use.

Well, that's the mistake that we make. We have to engineer the job we're doing to use just what the land will produce without destroying the land and what the water will use without destroying the subsoil base.

Q. I'll be brief. The basic problem is very deep rooted. It's rooted in our language. Why do we talk about "dirt" when we mean something which is living? "Dirt cheap," or it's nasty to be dirty? "Soil" is not quite so bad. It's not quite so bad to be soiled. But when we want to talk about the earth, it's the good earth. So let's stop talking about dirt to start with.

A. Thank you very much. Let me just say this though: that's the message that I'm trying to get across. That's what we have to destroy — the idea that it's dirt or dirt cheap, because it is not dirt. It's our most precious national resource and it's our future. It is not dirt cheap.

Q. My family farms near Grande Prairie. I was interested in what you say to those critics who say, well, you don't have to worry because today it's biotechnology, hydroponics, and so on, and we're all going to be happy.

A. They might very well be right. I can't answer that. I just don't want to gamble on that yet, that's all. The technology might do all of those things they're talking about, but, boy, I don't want to gamble on it.

Dealing With The Civil Service on Environmental Issues

Peter G. Lee

Peter Lee is manager of the Natural Areas Program for Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

I was asked to address this question: how should environmental groups communicate with civil servants in an attempt to get the civil servants' support of the group's activities?

I don't have statistics to tell you how civil servants think and act. I certainly didn't take a survey of my fellow employees and ask them what turns their crank when approached by environmental groups. But I will give you my personal view of the civil service, what I think some of our collective perceptions are, and what I think works in terms of approaches.

Large parts of this paper are taken from the book *The Fallacy of Wildlife Conservation* by John Livingston and from the article "Can Bureaucracies Become More Flexible and Responsive?" by Michael D. Longford (see references). I have presented parts of this paper before, so it may be repetitious for some. However, I have also substantially altered some parts and have added a new keyword. If you remember nothing else from my presentation I want you to remember this one keyword: elephant.

As a civil servant and biologist, I am convinced that elephants and bureaucracies are classic examples of parallel evolution.

As a civil servant and biologist, I am convinced that elephants and bureaucracies are classic examples of parallel evolution. They are so much alike. Small is beautiful, but elephants are extremely large. Elephants never forget. They also have thick skins. They trample the undergrowth. They eat too much and they are difficult for anyone but a trainer to control. But they do have their good points as well as their bad. For example, a well-trained elephant can tackle a workload beyond the range of other domesticated animals. They are also the same as other animals in that there are parts of an elephant's anatomy that are more susceptible to pressure than others. So the real topic of my presentation is an elephant's pressure points: identifying where they are and how to use your limited resources so you can be effective.

Nature of Bureaucracy

If you deal with the bureaucracy to advance your interests in conservation or environmental matters, it is critical that you understand the nature of the beast. Let's examine what bureaucracies are, or what some think they are.

Although it is not fashionable to hold elephants in contempt, it is fashionable to deprecate bureaucracies and their employees — the civil service. The compilers of Webster's International Dictionary expressed their negative value judgement of a bureaucracy as:

> *A system of administration marked by constant striving for increased functions and power, lack of initiative and flexibility, by indifference to human needs or public opinion, and by a tendency to defer decisions to superiors, or to impede actions with red tape.*

Similar to this, but more eloquently stated, a well-known Canadian naturalist, frustrated over the history and probable future of conservation in Canada, had this attitude about an organization like the civil service:

> *I no longer dare to look. The last time I looked, there was an endless tumbling cataract of identical managers, administrators and technicians. There wasn't a freed man in sight. There were a few splashes of pigeon whitewash on a massive bunker that houses [the civil service] and, within it, coveys of tight-lipped souls with pocket calculators and hard briefcases bent on managing our [province's] resources for the future through rational planning, design, development [and compromise].*

Now I'm not here to defend the civil service or to challenge Mr. Webster or to refute the observations of a noted Canadian naturalist.

Allow me the following comments, however. Bureaucracies are neither inherently good nor inherently evil. They have tremendous power, and, depending on the people running them, that power can be used well or badly. They can be and sometimes are run in an enlightened, visionary way, but most are not. And they can be influenced. Remember the susceptible parts of an elephant's anatomy.

Bureaucracies are neither inherently good nor inherently evil.

They are not, should not, and will never act like private sector enterprise, so don't ever expect them to. Private sector enterprise is not under the same legal obligations as government departments and statutory bodies. The private sector is answerable, not to the public at large, but to a small group of shareholders for the stewardship of funds. Its success or failure is measured in cash terms. Its objectives and accountability are quite different from those of the civil service.

It is not particularly difficult to generally figure out the civil service. It is accountable to the public through the politicians, for the most part. Consequently, the civil service is but a mere reflection of the politicians under which it operates. To a department in the civil service, the Minister's word is

The civil service is but a mere reflection of the politicians under which it operates.

absolute. And when the politicians, by way of the legislature, impose duties or confer rights on individual citizens, it is considered absolutely essential that the civil service administers the laws fairly and efficiently.

There are some casualties, however, in this system. One of the casualties is a lack of initiative. Such a quality does exist, of course, here and there. And changes do take place. But they happen gradually. Bright new ideas are optional extras while priority is given to carrying out existing statutory tasks. Another casualty is lack of flexibility, which is justified because two citizens, in exactly comparable circumstances, must be treated in exactly the same way.

Now, the civil service may generally have good and democratic intentions. Just like the elephant that has a heart of gold. But what most people see is his thick skin.

Leaving value judgments and analogies aside, let's quickly try to objectively list typical characteristics of the civil service:

1) The organization is an excruciatingly complex one with formal divisions of labor.
2) The organization has a very structured hierarchy. This means that in every part of it there are superiors and subordinates.
3) The activities of the organization as a whole, and of its component parts, are governed by impersonal rules. All employees are expected to act in accordance with the rules set out in the description of their jobs. This includes compliance with a confidentiality oath, sworn to by every employee.
4) Each job or office is independent of the person holding it. The job is a permanent one, but the individual job holder is temporary. Employees are relatively interchangeable.
5) Not withstanding point 4, the civil service has a very strong internalized system with its own self-feeding loyalties and rewards and punishments. In this sense, it has a natural tendency to become monolithic.
6) The organization maintains detailed written records of its activities and this constitutes a large portion of the employees' time.

Frustrations and Problems

I assume most of you have worked long and thought hard about environmental matters. If so, I know that in promoting your environmental interests with the civil service, the politicians, the media, the general public, or whomever, most of you have probably known frustration. Now there are all manners and kinds of frustrations in conservation. I would like to briefly deal with what I consider to be the source of some of the frustrations and failures.

Although you have had and will continue to have some successes in environmental matters, there is no doubt that there is a powerful ideological opposition to matters of the environment and that opposition is widespread, consistent, and vigorous.

There is a powerful ideological opposition to matters of the environment and that opposition is widespread, consistent, and vigorous.

At least superficially, that opposition seems to be based on overriding societal objectives of removing and preventing any constraints on fiscal profits and job creation, and on minimizing public sector expenditures. In fact, in Alberta, the change in our economic situation seems to have resulted in our social and economic objectives becoming one and the same. Conservation is often seen as an unnecessary and unwanted restraint on economic growth or at least a drain on the public purse. But more than that, setting aside protected areas, for example, is often seen as sterilization of the land and its resources — as the creation of "dead zones," which reduces flexibility and eliminates future options for economic recovery and well-being.

All of us who work toward conservation objectives, whether in the public or private sectors, are often led to believe that we have to make a trade-off between conservation and economics, whereas, in truth, only rarely is the choice that simple. Frequently, the opposition to conservation is even blatantly stronger than making trade-offs. You must often also prove that a conservation measure will be a short-term asset to economic growth, meaning it will create jobs and material wealth.

This in many situations forces proponents of a conservation measure to, as Aldo Leopold said, "invent subterfuges to give it economic importance." As a result, it is becoming quite in vogue for conservationists to argue economics in proposing conservation measures. We even hear of trying to broaden the commonly understood definition of economics — which has been understood to include only commercial and fiscal factors — to including extra or non-market values. This is quite a challenge for non-economists, to try to change broadly accepted definitions. (It would be like me trying to change Mr. Webster's definition of a bureaucracy.)

Now, I have no argument against using all of the tools at your disposal in order to convince others that conservation is important. The question is, what tools are readily at your disposal, given the severely limited resources (time, money, expertise, etc.) conservation interest groups and individuals have? This leads to the second source of frustration. In my opinion there is an absence of a sufficiently "squeaky wheel" in promoting conservation. Amateur or volunteer activists are at a serious disadvantage when they deal with full-time professionals from private business and the public bureaucracy. The professional is much better placed to understand and to manipulate the public policy process than someone who works a five-day week and is involved in promoting conservation on Saturday afternoon.

As well, conservation groups seem to find it difficult to meet the increasing demands that have been placed on them by the civil service and others. These demands, which many groups seem to have tentatively accepted as a normal part of interest group politics, include:

1) less emotionalism
2) more "hard" data and proof
3) addressing the "how much is enough" complaint
4) assuming total responsibility for the conservation measure
5) maintaining continuing contacts with the bureaucracy and with members of the Legislature.

You would probably all rather be out enjoying the outdoors than satisfying these demands.

Proponents of a conservation measure surprisingly often seem embarrassed, weak, defensive, and alone.

This constraint of the short supply of conservation group resources is compounded by the third source of frustration I see. This can be portrayed as a bureaucratic jungle of impediments that confront the public. Whether it is real or perceived makes little difference. The combination of legal arrangements and government institutions and procedures is often perceived as an intentional maze of confusion set up to discourage public participation.

The fourth and last serious source of frustration that I see is the "wimpishness" an[illegible]agmentation of support for the establishment of a conservation measure. Irregardless of some notable exceptions, such as the networking I heard about yesterday, proponents of a conservation measure surprisingly often seem embarrassed, weak, defensive, and alone. As a result, they are too easily labelled, put into a political box, and filed away for future amusing reference.

What Can You Do?

You can, as many do, use the nature of the civil service, with all its frustration and problems, as an excuse for whatever failures in conservation you have experienced. But you should know that such excuses are too easy. If you have used and continue to use the civil service as an excuse, you will probably continue to waste a depressingly large portion of your efforts. You will only get angry, ranting and raving at an unseen foe who is generally unaware of your existence, much less your fury. It is true that, as people interested in conservation, you have always lacked the financial arguments and manpower and muscle to play the political and bureaucratic game. You have perhaps lacked the ideological empathy of the decision-makers, maybe even of the majority of the general public. I don't know. But if this is true, these are no more than the facts of your existence. If you are active in conservation matters, disadvantage is simply the nature of your environment and it probably always will be in our society.

So, you can get angry — and I will speak about emotions later; it seems to be a popular topic — or you can get angry *and* busy. You now have two choices. Either you can take defensive or you can take offensive actions. In my opinion, defensive actions will likely not succeed.

> *Defensive actions [are only] delaying actions, always terribly busy and reflexive and reactive, simply because there usually is not time in which to regroup, dig in, consider and strategize. Confusion and fragmentation, exhausting flailing, often follow...[you] dart about stamping at tiny smolders in the carpet, rushing from hot spot to hot spot, when all the while the roof is racing to a fire storm and the walls are creaking toward collapse.*

Instead you should become more active in the day-to-day process related to your cause in order to achieve success. In order to do this, I have ten suggestions on how to successfully approach the civil service.

1) Develop clear objectives and strong arguments. Know what you want and why you want it. Don't leave it up to somebody else to interpret or decide for you.
2) Start early. Everything will take longer than you can possibly imagine.
3) Organize the necessary help. This usually includes local political and MLA support, cultivating friends in the bureaucracy and experts who can advise on technical matters (that is, legal, economic, biophysical), as well as building up public support for your proposal.
4) Know the rules and who's in charge. Despite the difficulty of sorting through the bureaucratic jungle, you must know who is making the decisions and what the rules of the game are and whether you want to follow them or not.
5) Be prepared to work out conflicts yourselves. Be prepared to compromise, but know your "bottom line" ahead of time. Learn how to negotiate agreement without giving in. Reduce the confrontations and conflicts and portray the issue as a "winner" as much as possible. Don't back yourself into a corner.

Be prepared to let anybody and everybody else take the credit.

6) Know when to speak up. Know when to bypass the bureaucracy and go to the top (that is, contact the Minister). The corollary of this is perhaps equally as important — know when to shut up. If things are progressing to your advantage, don't interfere.
7) Second-guess the opposition. This will save valuable time, avoid setting a negative tone, and diffuse conflicts.
8) Be prepared to let anybody and everybody else take the credit. Find out who needs the "brownie points" the most and who can best help you the next time.
9) Know how to use the media. This includes not just for applying pressure, but also for commending successes and the actors involved.
10) Be tenacious. Keep gnawing away at all the "red herrings" that get thrown in your way.

I will examine a portion of the fifth rule briefly — be prepared to work out conflicts yourselves. Despite what many may think and expect, the civil service will not usually do it for you, will not be your babysitter, and will not be your confidant. Like it or not, to work out the conflicts yourselves, you have to learn how to negotiate. Negotiation is a fact of life. To negotiate successfully, the Harvard Negotiation Project (Fisher and Ury, see references) recommends that you learn to:

- separate people from the problem
- focus on interests, not positions
- invent options for mutual gain
- insist on using objective criteria
- deal with opponents who are more powerful, who refuse to play by the rules or who resort to "dirty tricks."

Now this is not a lecture on how to negotiate, so I won't go any further on this topic. Libraries are filled with books on how to negotiate. Certainly all of the above recommendations sound very logical and calculating. But the point I want to make is that, in negotiating an environmental position, never assume that there is a rational dialogue between yourselves and the civil service, or any group, for that matter. Never even assume that it is a civilized adversarial proceeding in which reason, logic, and meticulous argument, conservatively laced with horrible precedent, will persuade just men and women to your position. In my opinion, many organizations — perhaps yours — have invested heavily in these assumptions. I can tell you that even an abstract intellectual grasp of your arguments is rarely achieved. It just doesn't work!

Earlier I had stated that one of the demands placed on conservation groups, and one they seem to accept, is to be less emotional. It's a classic but crushing accusation levelled against environmentalists — "you're being too emotional!" It's like being involved in conservation must be for emotional, intuitive, irrational folk — like *women*, for example. And being emotional comes close to committing a crime against nature.

Well, let me tell you a secret. Next to fiscal considerations, emotion, properly used, or as Susie Washington said yesterday, managed emotion, is probably the most powerful weapon you've got in your negotiation arsenal with the civil service. And you can be sure that those you negotiate with use this tool to the fullest. As Alice Hendry mentioned yesterday at lunch, we are all emotional beings. Most of our major life decisions are emotionally based. You are reacting to my talking to you to a large extent on an emotional level. And I am reacting to you as my audience on mostly an emotional level. You and I are involved in environmental issues, especially when you are a volunteer, for an emotional reason. It is why you got involved. The trick is really to manage that emotion by channeling it to your advantage. When you deal with the "cold, bureaucratic jungle," remember that you are really only dealing with individuals.

Conclusion

Like many involved in environmental matters, perhaps you think that the civil service is the sole problem, just like the elephant that occasionally stampedes villages, causing havoc and ruin. Consequently, you probably experience an incredible urgency to do something, like attacking and killing the elephant, for example. Instead of trying to kill the elephant, I would caution you to look at the subtler reasons for the stampede. Identify the elephant's pressure points and use your limited resources on those approaches to the civil service that work — approaches like principled negotiation. Effective negotiation requires using all of the tools, including emotion, you have to work with. Remember that an elephant walks in a straight line unless the pressure on his sensitive areas is strong enough for him to feel it.

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Communication From the Minister

Address to the Annual Joint Meeting

Honorable Ken Kowalski

Honorable Ken Kowalski is Alberta's Minister of the Environment, and MLA for the constituency of Barrhead.

Ladies and gentlemen, I must admit I stand here this afternoon with some feelings of apprehension. That's because I am hoping you have forgiven me for not being able to be here last year. I had accepted your invitation and was very much looking forward to the occasion. Unfortunately, a few weeks before the meeting there was a clash between two immovable objects — myself and some very solid boards on a skating rink in Barrhead. The latter won the argument, and the former ended up having eight miserable months, then surgery. Therefore, today I offer you my assurances that missing last year's joint meeting of the ECA was definitely not due to lack of interest, but to lack of mobility.

CCREM Task Force on Environment and Economy

It's difficult for me to dampen my enthusiasm or support regarding the report of the National Task Force on Environment and Economy. The implementation of many of its recommendations will influence and touch generations of Albertans to come. I am justly proud of the pivotal role Alberta played in encouraging the establishment of the Task Force at the 1986 annual meeting of CCREM held in Banff and during the time that I served as president of the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers. That initiative aptly demonstrates Alberta's historic and continued leadership in encouraging federal-provincial dialogue on environmental issues of national and international concern.

The report is being hailed as one of the most important and far-reaching Canadian environment initiatives of the century, and when the Honorable Tom McMillan, Canada's Minister of the Environment, placed our national response to the World Commission on Environment and Development before the United Nations Assembly on Monday, October 19, 1987, it was a meaningful day for the many individuals who have striven through the years to gain support for a philosophy that our nation, indeed, the world community, must embrace if we are to successfully achieve environmentally sound economic development.

The National Task Force Report was not only an integral part of Canada's response, but was also warmly received by other nations.

The National Task Force Report was not only an integral part of Canada's response, but was also warmly received by other nations. Albertans can look at October 19, 1987 as a very special day, as it was right here in our province, just over a year before, that the seeds were planted that culminated in this powerful document being recognized in such an admirable fashion.

We now must get things underway here in Alberta to assure that the report does not become just another powerful document gathering dust on a shelf, but a living one as well, one where recommendations become reality, and words become actions, and I'm delighted to reaffirm that the process to ultimately achieve that goal has already begun.

I would like to read an extract from the November 26, 1987 opening remarks of the Prime Minister of Canada to the public session of the First Ministers' Conference, held last week in Toronto.

> *In September, the National Task Force on Environment and Economy, which included representatives of business, governments, citizen's groups, universities, and colleges from across the country, reported to ministers. Its recommendations promote the goal of sustainable economic development, that is, to ensure that the utilization of resources today does not damage prospects for the future. The First Ministers agreed yesterday to endorse this report in principle, and to encourage the Council of Ministers to continue the work toward the achievement of environmentally sound economic development based on private and public sector co-operation.*

May I suggest Mr. Mulroney's words clearly endorse the Report of the Task Force on Environment and Economy, and the principles on which it is based.

On the home front we have already begun to explore the various avenues available that can assist to inspire debate and discussions among Albertans regarding this important matter. Within 10 days of Mr. McMillan's presentation to the United Nations, close to 800 organizations within Alberta received a copy of the National Task Force Report. Attached was my personal invitation to submit observations, comments, or opinions that could assist the Government of Alberta in formulating a provincial action plan.

Response to my request has already begun and, to date, that response has been extraordinarily positive. I'd like to share one response with you that I received November 16, because it was particularly impressive and rather representative of the support that is being generated from those I contacted. It is from the president of Alberta Sand and Gravel Association and reads as follows:

> *The Alberta Sand and Gravel Association was originally formed so that industry, interacting with government, could co-operate on environment-economy integration. From the outset, this association recognized the need to address environmental concerns, while striving to ensure that a balance with economic activities be maintained at all times.*
>
> *We believe that this co-operation has worked well to this date, and that much has been achieved in dealing with the problems resulting from the economic activity within this industry. I believe we may both be proud of the co-operative approach taken by our association and your department in achieving these results.*
>
> *Currently, as a result of Environment's initiative, we will be bringing together five or six companies to help work out a regional reclamation plan for the North Saskatchewan River Valley between Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan.*
>
> *There is no question, given common-sense leadership, that the broad policies and concepts of the Task Force can and will be achieved.*
>
> *Hopefully, sound management of our resources and environment can be achieved through continued joint effort in all sections of our economy. The Alberta Sand and Gravel Association stands ready to assist in the implementation of the Task Force objective.*

While this letter illustrates the general response I am receiving regarding the Task Force Report, it also serves to reinforce one of my personal beliefs, and one that I have repeatedly expressed at every opportunity over the last 18 months. Alberta does not consist of 2.35 million people divided by categories called industry, government, and special-interest groups. Alberta has 2.35 million environmentalists, who also just happen to be members of the public, associated with industry, manufacturing, agriculture, education, or government, be it provincial or local. Therefore, I'm sure you will agree that it makes a great deal of sense to involve as many of those 2.35 million environmentalists as possible in assisting the Government of Alberta in the initial development of required strategies fundamental to wise environment-economic integration, especially since those strategies will, in all likelihood, have more significant impact on future generations of Albertans than any other initiatives generated during the 1980s.

In addition to the report being distributed to major industries, manufacturers, and every university, college, and technical institution within Alberta, it was also distributed to my elected colleagues, every municipal government, chambers of commerce, provincial government departments, and organizations having special interests in environmental protection and safekeeping. I was very pleased to see the Environment Council of Alberta so graciously supplement our efforts by spotlighting the report and its availability in its November publications.

It's doubtful that there is another facility in Canada that so readily demonstrates environmental-economic harmony as Alberta's special waste treatment center near Swan Hills.

I feel strongly that several of the Task Force recommendations are well suited for Alberta, and several more are consistent with what is already taking place. It's doubtful that there is another facility in Canada that so readily demonstrates environmental-economic harmony as Alberta's special waste treatment center near Swan Hills. Similarly, the development of Alberta's Water Literacy Program, the first comprehensive water education program in Canada, combined with several other superb educational tools offered to teachers through our Environmental Education Branch, vividly illustrates just how well ahead of our sister provinces we actually are in the development of well-balanced environment education programs for use in elementary and secondary schools.

Last, but by no means least, is our continuing effort to provide an improved "State of the Environment" reporting procedure.

I would like to dwell for a moment on one specific recommendation of the Task Force Report. It is the suggestion that provincial "round tables" should be created to address environmental and economic issues. These round tables would draw representation from various provincial sectors such as municipal government, the public, industry, labor, and business. Alberta already has several such groups in place to deal with specific localized issues. However, the expansion of such a concept to deal with province-wide concerns could provide further framework for achieving greater integration of our environment and our economy. To this end, I have recently set up a small working group that will investigate and identify the various methods and processes that could be available to the Government of Alberta in bringing this additional initiative to life.

Alberta is, in my view, far ahead of our sister provinces with respect to environmental initiatives and in no way would I want to see the "round table" concept turn into simply another bureaucratic step or hurdle that one would agree to go through prior to implementing new initiatives.

Conservation Strategy

Let me turn our attention for a moment to the subject of the Alberta Conservation Strategy. I have certainly not hidden my support of the Environment Council of Alberta's initiative in this regard. The National Task Force Report recommends that conservation strategies be in place in every province and territory by 1992. In a recent letter to Mrs. Sloan, I noted that Alberta is in a good position to respond positively to this recommendation. In fact, I believe that an Alberta document should be finalized before that date.

Last February, I met with the Environment Council of Alberta's Public Advisory Committee. At that time I requested your input into assuring that the public, industry, and government be partners in developing this blueprint for the future.

Today I would like to reiterate both the need and my commitment to that process.

Communication

I recently had the pleasure of addressing a group of Albertans gathered in Grande Prairie who were concerned about the many water resources management issues we are struggling to overcome or resolve in this province. The conference, sponsored very effectively, I might add, by the Northern Alberta Development Council, was well planned. The issues were identified before hand, were well researched, and everyone involved — public delegates, industry representatives, senior provincial government officials, and local authorities — actively shared in the process of discussion and debate, and, from what I understand, I will be receiving some excellent suggestions and recommendations as a result. Such a co-operative process, free from confrontation, free of polarization, and free from any group or individuals wishing to promote only their own, at times, narrow point of view is, as far as I'm concerned, good communication and public participation in action. Interestingly enough, one of the recurring issues, and the one most repeatedly expressed to conference organizers beforehand as a major concern to be addressed and tackled, was communication, public participation, public access to information, and problem-referral processes between Albertans and Alberta Environment. The group challenged me and my senior staff to improve our track record in those areas. We enthusiastically accepted that challenge.

Improved communication, increased public participation, better public access to information, and more acceptable problem-referral processes are exactly what we want.

Ladies and gentlemen, the true reality is that improved communication, increased public participation, better public access to information, and more acceptable problem-referral processes are exactly what we want.

One of my key priorities since becoming Minister has been to improve communication with Albertans and increase emphasis on public information and consultation. I truly believe that during this last year Alberta Environment has, on the whole, developed better relationships with those we serve, a relationship based, not on blind trust, but on mutual respect and a commitment to listen to other views. I also believe that there is only one way such a relationship can continually improve. It is for both government and the public to work harder at communicating with each other, and to work harder at recognizing each other's area of expertise. However, I also think, in the end, that each must recognize that communication is a joint responsibility.

I have noticed that the majority of your time during the last few days has concentrated on ways and methods to better communicate with the public outside your membership: the media, politicians, and the civil service. May I commend your organizing group on highlighting such important issues, and on the attempts to strengthen the Environment Council of Alberta's approach to the way it accepts its communication responsibilities. Albertans are becoming increasingly sophisticated and well informed on environmental issues and concerns. For me, it is certainly good news to hear that the ECA is endeavoring to extend to them the same respect we have striven to extend to each other during the last 18 months.

It is doubtful if, in the 16-year history of the Department, more information has flowed to Albertans about what Alberta Environment is doing, what it intends, what it has achieved, and what it has not.

In my view, it is doubtful if, in the 16-year history of the Department, more information has flowed to Albertans about what Alberta Environment is doing, what it intends, what it has achieved, and what it has not. Both executive and senior management staff have accepted numerous invitations and have taken advantage of every available opportunity to share our ideas, receive them from others, and to express our feeling that public participation in environmental issues must remain the rule, not the rarity. We have publicly released 141 reports this last year, issued more than 250 press releases on projects and issues of public interest, and have attempted through open houses and meetings to seek and encourage involvement of municipal governments, the public, and other government agencies in all we are involved in. Through this last year we have assisted the people of Fort MacKay in undertaking a major report addressing the historical, cultural, and native perspectives of the Athabasca River, revamped the methods by which we issue high water advisories and flood warnings, strengthened our ties with local disaster services organizations, visited schools, visited communities, and listened.

However, most achievements are accompanied by some disappointments. While the Department has, during this last year, made tremendous strides in many, many areas of communication, I accept the responsibility and openly acknowledge that there are still some areas where we are not doing as well as we want, or should. I am determined, indeed demanding, of both myself and my staff that by this time next year we have some concrete evidence of improvement in the area of public access, and a more streamlined and effective problem-referral process. How is that going to come about? Specifically, I am hopeful it will be one of the many positive results of a more streamlined and effective organization.

Reorganization: Winds of Change Internally and Externally

The Speech from the Throne, presented March 5, 1987, by the Honorable Helen Hunley, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, ushered in an important change in Alberta Environment's mission statement. Until this redefinition of our mandate, we were responsible for ensuring a balance between resource development and environmental protection. Our challenge is to achieve the protection, improvement, and wise use of our environment now and in the future.

This is a critical change and one that shifts Alberta's focus towards a tougher approach to environmental protection. Simply put, Alberta Environment has been given a fresh path to follow and a new direction. For this reason, the organizational structure of the department is being adjusted. It will allow us to more readily adapt to meet our changing responsibilities. We feel it will also better allow us to improve service, provide faster response to concerns, and certainly increase our effectiveness.

Alberta Environment has been given a fresh path to follow and a new direction.

Under an astute deputy minister and a senior management staff committed to successfully meeting this new direction and new challenge, the winds of change are sweeping through the halls of Oxbridge Place and will continue until the whole organization is better structured and, with that, better prepared to meet the increased responsibilities that have resulted from a modified philosophy. In my mind it would be an unrealistic expectation to simply demand that Alberta Environment improve effectiveness and efficiency without first introducing and supporting the needed processes, and the organizational structure that allows those very things to occur. It is incumbent upon myself, and my senior management staff, to assure those internal requirements are met.

In order to achieve a more streamlined operation and bring functional divisions together, the department has embarked on a new directional plan. Many of its recommendations are now being introduced. You will find during the next few months that a new internal structure has evolved in two of our major services, environmental protection and water resources management.

On November 1, 1987, the divisions of Design and Construction and Operations and Maintenance were amalgamated into one. The formation of one more solidified division called Development and Operations is concrete evidence of the Department's willingness to adapt where necessary in order to improve public service. In this regard, we recognized some of the difficulties the public was encountering when dealing with what was perceived by many to be a slow-moving and cumbersome structure. We recognized some of our own difficulties regarding overlapping of responsibilities and at times hazy perimeters of jurisdiction. Development and Operations brings more than a dozen water resources management branches, programs, and administrative areas under one banner, and brings the overall divisional structure in line with the five major services the division provides province wide, that is, investigate, design, supervise construction, operate, and maintain the water structures across the province that have been financed by the Government of Alberta. It is not an insignificant matter, as it represents a capital investment by Albertans of more than $1.5 billion.

Environmental Law Review

Within Environment Protection Services we are now just a few short steps away from the creation of the new environmental enforcement capacity that I announced in August. This, of course, is intricately wrapped with one of the major and, perhaps, the most important of the many initiatives we launched this year, that being the appointment of a review panel to undertake a comprehensive review of environmental law enforcement in Alberta.

The Panel's purpose was to strengthen the enforcement of Alberta's environmental statutes. Its representatives from government, industry, and the public were asked to examine Alberta's current approach to enforcing environmental legislation and prepare an action plan for making improvements. The Panel's four main tasks involved the following:

a) a review of start-up clauses in licences to operate, including recommendations on specific conditions which should be encompassed in new licences.

b) a review of Alberta Environment's present approach to enforcement including a detailed assessment of the Department's current enforcement capability and procedures.

c) a review of enforcement in other jurisdictions including the enforcement practices of other provincial environment departments.

And finally, as previously mentioned, the Panel was asked to develop an action plan to strengthen the enforcement of Alberta's environmental laws.

The Panel has recently completed all of those tasks in an excellent and detailed manner. I am presently reviewing their recommendations, and you may expect a major announcement regarding this matter within a very short time.

Acid Deposition Research Program

While the Environmental Enforcement Review must be considered a major and important initiative, it is certainly not our only accomplishment. On November 25, 1987, I filed 15 reports prepared through the Acid Deposition Research Program or ADRP. The ADRP is funded by Alberta Environment, the Canadian Petroleum Association, Alberta's electrical utilities, and the Energy Resources Conservation Board. This joint government-industry initiative clearly places Alberta in a position of international leadership with respect to research on the critical issue of acid rain.

The Acid Deposition Research Program was initiated in 1983 to answer two important questions:

1) At the present time, are there observed or measurable adverse effects of acid precipitation and acidifying pollutants on Alberta's crops, forests, soils, streams, and lakes?
2) If not, where, when, and under what conditions will such effects occur?

To answer these questions, the ADRP awarded a contract to a study team led by the University of Calgary's Kananaskis Centre for Environmental Research. The study team includes experts from the academic community, the private sector, and Alberta research organizations. The ADRP also created a Science Advisory Board consisting of 10 internationally reputed scientists representing all aspects of the study. The Board oversees the content and quality of the research being conducted by the study team.

The ADRP is unique among acid deposition research programs in that a single team of scientists has been asked to examine all aspects of acidic deposition.

The ADRP is unique among acid deposition research programs in that a single team of scientists has been asked to examine all aspects of acidic deposition, and those 15 reports received in the House represent the completion of two major components in the Acid Deposition Research Program.

The first component is a comprehensive analysis of the world literature on acidic deposition, which is now published in the form of an 11-volume, 1,300-page review. This literature review has provided the ADRP's scientists with an understanding of where, when, and under what conditions adverse ecological effects have been observed. The review also includes some initial observations on how the world-wide information relates to Alberta's specific environmental conditions.

The second major accomplishment is a four-volume emission source inventory. It identifies predominant sources and the rates of emission of sulphur dioxide (SO_2) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) in Alberta.

This information, together with the air quality information that has been gathered through the ADRP since 1985, gives Alberta one of the most complete and high-quality data sets in the world for this kind of research.

Two additional components in the ADRP's strategy have yet to be completed. They are the measurement and description of Alberta's air quality, and the development of estimates to answer the two questions at the heart of the ADRP's objectives. We expect both of these components to be completed in about eight months. I should also mention that all 15 research reports released so far are available to the public.

Swan Hills Special Waste Treatment Centre

Another outstanding achievement was the official opening on September 11, 1987 of the new provincial special waste treatment center near Swan Hills.

The center is a milestone without precedent in North America. Nowhere else on this continent is there a fully integrated facility capable of treating and disposing of all known special wastes at one location, and nowhere else in North America has a society been more involved in identifying the problem of managing hazardous wastes and in working towards a solution.

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This $50 million treatment center was built, and is now being operated under contract by Chem-Security Ltd., a subsidiary of Bow Valley Resource Services Ltd. It employs 46 people and is capable of treating any non-nuclear hazardous waste produced in Alberta.

Strict environmental monitoring has been in effect since before start-up and will continue for the life of the facility. Surface and ground water, soil and vegetation, air quality, mammals, and fish are all monitored regularly, and now that the facility is up and being tested we are moving into the next phase of developing a total system for the management of hazardous waste. Key among the various authorities involved are the three provincial organizations for which I am responsible, Alberta Environment, the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation, and Alberta Public Safety Services. These organizations are working and will continue to work together to ensure implementation of a total system.

Transportation Network

A transportation network is also being developed to provide safe, efficient, and controlled transport of wastes to Swan Hills. All movement of wastes to the center will be managed by the operator to ensure that proper packaging, placarding, driver training, documentation, and emergency capability is in place.

Draft Policy for Hazardous Wastes and Recyclable Materials

Additionally, a draft policy on the management of hazardous wastes and recyclable materials has been developed. In October, 1987, I asked Albertans to participate in the process to bring about changes in the way we manage hazardous waste by commenting on this particular draft policy and the proposed amendments to the hazardous waste regulation.

The ultimate result will be a document that clearly articulates Alberta's position on hazardous wastes and provides a framework to guide the environment protection aspects related to hazardous waste management. The aims of this document are already clearly defined. They are to reduce the amount of hazardous waste generated in Alberta, ensure that hazardous wastes are properly handled from cradle to grave, and to make it easier to recycle, rather than dispose of, hazardous wastes.

Hazardous Waste Regulation

The proposed amendments to the hazardous waste regulation will support the implementation of this policy. They will enable us to restrict the disposal and storage of hazardous wastes by prohibiting landfilling of specific hazardous wastes in excess of defined, minimum concentrations at all landfill sites in Alberta, and by setting limits on the length of time and the maximum amount of hazardous waste that can be stored in order that storage does not replace proper treatment and disposal.

To me, these restrictions are a must, an essential requirement that will guarantee that we do not transfer any risks involved from one part of the environment to another.

The draft policy, the proposed amendments, and the public comments gathered to September 4, 1987, have already been reviewed by the Hazardous Chemicals Advisory Committee, a committee that includes public, industry, and government representation. I'm hopeful the proclamation for the regulation will be announced in the very near future.

Hazardous Waste Education and Awareness Campaign

Another initiative I would like to review is the provincial hazardous waste education and awareness campaign. It is a program we are particularly proud of because, as the slogan readily identifies, "Alberta does have a better way."

The program includes specially tailored training programs for waste generators and transporters, government employees, in fact, for everyone sharing responsibility for the efficient operation of the hazardous wastes system in Alberta. A series of public information aids have been developed, such as detailed fact sheets, posters, a video presentation and other information pieces, and a $400,000 advertising campaign highlights our new treatment center and management system. Closely associated with this program is the "Help End Landfill Pollution" or HELP initiative.

Shortly after I assumed the Environment portfolio a year and a half ago, I had to deal with the discovery of an abandoned landfill on the site of a major Alberta industry, of which the company had no record. The existence, location, or even the contents of the landfill were not so much the problem as was the fact that no one seemed to know anything about it. It certainly highlighted another fact, that being that there was a great need to know more about what exists in this province in terms of industrial landfills. We needed a mechanism for identifying potential problems, and a system for rectifying and reclaiming problem sites.

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Phase One of HELP Already Completed

The HELP program was launched to accomplish these things and, so far, I am very pleased with the results. The first phase of our program was completed this summer. It involved a comprehensive inventory of all active, closed, and abandoned industrial landfills in Alberta, as well as preliminary assessment of these sites. Some 640 sites were identified and we are now well into phase two of our program: detailed assessment of those landfill sites.

HELP's Guiding Policies

The HELP program has a few guide posts which may interest you. First, Albertans will be the first to know if any site poses an immediate threat to human health or the environment. Second, any such site will immediately proceed to phase three: preventative action and clean-up. Last, the financial burden of clean-up will fall to the landfill owner.

Review of Regional Waste Management Assistance Program

The Regional Waste Management Assistance program can be cited as another example of how the government, in co-operation with other authorities, is working toward better management of solid wastes. Through this program, a series of small dumps are reclaimed and replaced with "state-of-the-art" regional sanitary landfills that are supervised and environmentally safe.

The program secures the location of transfer stations, allowing residents to easily deposit wastes in their immediate vicinity. These wastes are then transported to the regional sanitary landfill site on a regular basis.

The program also provides initial funding to establish waste management systems. Local authorities then assume the responsibility for all operating costs.

Today more than 275,000 Albertans are served by 20 regional systems, and since the program was initiated in 1976, the province has funded capital costs and land acquisitions in excess of $20 million. I am, however, currently conducting a program review that includes looking at our past approach to financing. Certainly it is time to evaluate such policies and procedures if only to reaffirm that the best interest of all parties involved is being achieved.

Recycling Programs

Additionally, in response to a recommendation from yourselves, the Environment Council of Alberta, I am looking at methods such as incineration and recycling to reduce the amount of waste that must be landfilled.

The word "recycling" conjures up a lot of great things ahead for Albertans as implementation of a sound recycling strategy can bring relief to the environment, economic opportunities, new employment, and a break for taxpayers. For this reason I am really very pleased that during this last year we have been able to launch a number of specific recycling initiatives throughout the province. These included a pilot curbside recycling program in co-operation with the City of Edmonton that met with tremendous success, and a community composting project in the village of Ryley, where all compostable household material, such as food wastes and garden cuttings, are picked up on a weekly basis.

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Additionally, the government recently provided an $80,000 grant to Applied Polymer Research, an Edmonton plastics recycling company, for research on the feasibility of recycling plastic pesticide containers. Some 700,000 plastic pesticide containers are collected by rural municipalities each year and are currently stored at 104 municipal collection sites throughout the province. I recognize that these containers are viewed by many as a problem. However, I also believe they can provide a valuable resource for recycling. In this regard, I will soon be approaching provincial pesticide manufacturers with the results of our research in this area, as I am convinced they have both the spirit and integrity to assume the responsibility to implement and manage a safe and effective container recycling program. It is most appropriate at this time to mention that I have also established a committee to examine methods of encouraging the development of a tire recycling industry here in Alberta.

Alberta has shown, through all these efforts, that we are serious about recycling and serious about becoming a national leader in this area.

Alberta has shown, through all these efforts, that we are serious about recycling and serious about becoming a national leader in this area. The May, 1987 release of the Environment Council of Alberta's Report and Recommendations on recycling will also go a long way in helping to achieve that goal. Prior to the release, the public hearings panel heard 134 representations from individual Albertans and 20 presentations from provincial and federal departments and non-government agencies.

The ECA report is now before the public. Various groups and associations have been asked to react to the document. When that process is complete, I will review recommendations pertaining to current Alberta Environment programs, and also make an announcement as to ways such organizations as the Environment Council of Alberta and the Government of Alberta may continue to co-operate in bringing about a provincial recycling program that will serve Albertans well today, and benefit generations of Albertans in the future.

Beverage Container Act Amendments

I take this opportunity to also mention that we have recently enacted amendments to the Beverage Container Act and Regulation which will come into effect February 1, 1988. This will produce several important changes to the existing system.

By broadening the definition of a beverage, the amendments will ensure that certain beverages and containers that were previously exempt from the system are now subject to it. The major new additions to the system are bottled waters, non-alcoholic beer, and fruit drinks.

In addition, the deposit structure on containers has also been revised. Effective February 1, 1988, containers with a capacity of more than 170 milliliters and less than one liter will have a deposit value of five cents. Containers with a capacity of one liter or more will have a deposit value of 20 cents.

What these two changes mean for the consumer is that containers for bottled waters and individual-serving containers for juices, fruit drinks, and waters will now be accepted at bottle depots.

During the next year, I will also be appointing a Beverage Container Advisory Committee to advise me on the content, administration, enforcement, and application of the Act and regulation.

A public information campaign is also planned for early in the new year in order to inform Albertans of the changes to the beverage container system and to encourage citizens to contribute to the cause of recycling.

During the last year, we have expended a great deal of time and attention in addressing many environmental management concerns expressed by Albertans. Based on the information I've just shared, one could far too easily receive the impression that our only priorities, our only initiatives, and our only achievements have been concentrated in the waste management and environment protection aspects of the job. However, the Government of Alberta has placed another very important responsibility with Alberta Environment. In turn, the way we undertake to carry out that responsibility affects every man, woman, and child in every village, town, city, and municipality in the province.

Alberta's Water Resources

Having the responsibility to wisely manage Alberta's water resources is a rather complex and demanding task, and Alberta's diverse topography and climatic differences have created a different set of water management problems north and south. One of the advantages Albertans have in this regard is that the Government of Alberta has long recognized that different water-related problems, different challenges, in different locations of the province, require different solutions.

Generally, when discussing demands, northern Alberta has a massive surplus of water for its required consumptive needs, and northern Albertans are justifiably concerned with ways to offset the drainage and flood control problems resulting from that reality. Conversely, southern Alberta has access to only about 13 percent of Alberta's available water, but has 80 percent of the demand. Compound this with a few unchanging facts — a climate that provides a fast spring melt and fast run off, acknowledgement that 60 percent of Alberta's water usually flows through the province in a short three-month period — and it is rather easy to assess the challenge, and the need to manage and control water in the north, and catch it and secure it in the south.

Alberta has followed sound water resources management philosophies for more than two decades. Our water management principles stress that every effort must be expended to assure that this precious natural resource is available and utilized by all Albertans, regardless of where in the province they reside. I feel that it is incumbent upon us to continue to practice those basic principles of water management that have been developed to a very sophisticated scale in Alberta, as they are the reason why Alberta has a degree of water resource sufficiency that other provinces envy, and the reason Alberta is noted as one of the forerunners in water resources management in Canada. Our approach to water management must be one that continues to assure our water is working for all Albertans, at all times, in all parts of the province. Of equal importance is the long-term protection of the environment, protection of fish and wildlife, and a commitment to water quality standards unsurpassed in most parts of this continent.

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Oldman River Dam

I will be using most of my remaining time this afternoon to review some of the water-related matters the Department has been involved in during this last year. However, before I do that, I cannot in good faith stand before you and ignore an issue that has and, unfortunately, may continue to place a great deal of stress on thousands of Albertans, regardless of which side of the arguments involved they, as individuals, choose to support. Almost a decade, and several provincial elections, have come and gone since discussions began regarding the construction of a dam on the Oldman River. Let us also not ignore that the decision to proceed was reached only after lengthy and extensive studies, reviews, public meetings, and hearings. You are all well aware, also, that the ultimate decision following these efforts was that only a combination of onstream and offstream storage would adequately and efficiently manage the water resources of the Oldman River basin. True to that ideal, we have since that time proceeded to improve and increase the offstream storage capacity in that area with the construction of the Badger Lake, Stafford, and Forty-Mile Coulee Reservoirs.

From the day, August 9, 1984, the construction of the Oldman River dam was announced until today, December 4, 1987, we have always recognized and publicly acknowledged that the environment of this area will not remain the same with a dam and reservoir in place. At the same time, we have also repeatedly stated that we can, and will, have a dam without significant detrimental impact on the area's environment. To that end, work is already underway to improve fish habitat both upstream and downstream of the dam site to help compensate for any fisheries loss in the immediate vicinity of the reservoir. Also, work has started on habitat improvement for wildlife in areas adjacent to the reservoir.

During the last several weeks the historical resources aspects of the project have received extensive and colorful media attention. I believe this coverage to have been very beneficial, as it helped publicize the fact that the construction of the Oldman River dam and reservoir has afforded government the opportunity to study and assess the historic, archaelogical, and paleontological resources of the area, and to put together some of the pieces of our past. Working together with Alberta Culture, Alberta Environment has conducted an extensive inventory and assessment of these resources and is preparing plans to preserve those of historical significance. We must remember that it is the information contained in these sites that is of importance. This information and significant artifacts will be preserved.

About 20 minutes ago, I expressed my thanks to the Environment Council of Alberta for its initiatives in supporting and promoting the National Task Force Report on Environment and Economy. This very report which we, along with millions of Canadians agree is a most significant and most worthwhile document, is based on the premise that environmental protection and economic development are not "one or the other" propositions. They can and do go together. Through comprehensive planning and one of the most extensive mitigation efforts ever applied in western Canada, I intend to ensure that this happens with the Oldman River dam.

Interbasin Augmentation

It appears that dead issues, somewhat like Jason in *Friday the 13th* movies, have a nasty habit of resurfacing, regardless of their plausibility. During the last few months there has been some press coverage, and some discussions at various functions, regarding the pros and cons of water diversion. I would very much like to put this dead issue to rest once and for all.

The water resources of this province are managed on a river basin system, and have been since 1977. Within the framework of this planning approach is a clearly defined statement identifying that the water in each of Alberta's six major river basins must be fully utilized before interbasin augmentation could be considered. The key word here is "could" be considered, not "should" be, "may" be, or "will" be. Let me assure you that Alberta has a long way to go before water in each of these basins is fully utilized. That being the case, I would like to reaffirm once again that there will be no change in Alberta Environment's support and commitment to this particular water resources management principle. In this era of fiscal restraint in the public sector, in this era of wise water resources management, in this era of environmental protection, indeed, in this era of environmental awareness, the concept of interbasin water transfer does not meet any of the management objectives of this government.

Exporting of Alberta's Water

Similarly, we will not be party to, give consideration, nor support any thoughts that may exist within our province, or outside of it, that suggest Alberta's water is for export.

Interprovincial Negotiations

As the guardian of the headwaters of several of the great rivers of this continent, Alberta has a serious obligation to follow one of the golden rules of water management. That is to treat our neighboring provinces in a fair and responsible manner, as having a clean, plentiful supply of water is just as important to them as it is to ourselves. As such, we have a long-standing agreement with Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and the Government of Canada regarding our eastern flowing streams that has worked very well for almost 20 years. It is very important that a similar workable agreement be developed for northern waters. During this last year, we continued our vigorous approach to securing interprovincial understanding so that our neighbors on all sides know what they can expect and what they can depend on from Alberta and we resumed negotiations with the Government of British Columbia heading to an agreement regarding the management of the Peace River basin.

Alberta Agricultural Land Base Study

We have also been very involved in the Alberta agricultural land base study. This comprehensive study, conducted in partnership with the Departments of Agriculture, Transportation, Municipal Affairs, and Forestry, Lands and Wildlife, examines and compares a number of long-range resource management opportunities for expanding and intensifying agricultural production in Alberta. One interesting component identifies drainable wetlands that could be drained within a sound environmental management context. It can guide agricultural and drainage programs to areas that will provide the best returns, while at the same time assure that key Alberta wetlands are not drained. This study will also greatly assist us in addressing issues related to ground water recharge, base flows, and protection of wildlife habitat, and go a long way in helping the government to resolve many of the current watershed, wetland, and ground water management problems we are now struggling to overcome. Similar comments can also be made about another soon-to-be released report titled *Drainage Potential in Alberta: An Integrated Study*. Both will be made public in the new year.

Review of Surface and Ground Water Legislation

This latter item leads to another initiative we are currently undertaking. That is a careful and thorough internal review of all legislation governing surface water and ground water. Hopefully this review will be completed in 1988. If this legislation is found to lack adequate protection for ground water, or for its users, I will be announcing a plan to rectify that situation.

Cold Lake-Beaver River Task Force

Somewhat related to this matter are several issues still outstanding concerning the ground water limits and allocations in the Cold Lake-Beaver River basin. As you are aware, I established a task force in July, 1987 to address those concerns and bring forward recommendations for my consideration.

This task force represented not just provincial government opinion but the points of view of the citizens of the Cold Lake area and the petroleum industry as well. Two weeks ago I received the Cold Lake Task Force Report, and I will be advising both the local community and industry of my decisions after I have had the appropriate time to thoroughly review the consequences and implications of both the individual and group recommendations now before me.

In my view it is important that everyone involved understands that our new mandate — that shift from a balancing role to a tougher environmental protection and enforcement approach — does not simply extend to two areas of our environment and exclude the third. The approach will be applied to our water resources as well and, in this regard, I am not prepared to compromise my position regarding water quality under any circumstances. The priority is, and will remain, to protect Alberta's ground water, Alberta's rivers, Alberta's lakes, and Alberta's integrity in dealing with all three.

Water Quality Standards

New Pulp Mill Projects

Alberta's standards for effluent quality must always reflect the best achievable technology and I have directed my staff to insist on such standards in dealing with any new industrial expansion proposals. I believe that specific direction and that water quality commitment is being aptly demonstrated regarding the development of two new pulp mill projects currently underway in the Athabasca River basin, one near Whitecourt, the other at Hinton.

Before any further licences or permits are issued, Alberta Environment will have taken every possible step to determine and understand the environmental and health effects of both these new operations and will have taken steps to assure protection of the Athabasca River as well. Three studies have already been initiated in that regard and a comprehensive planning study for the Athabasca River is already underway. It will include several reports on water quality issues and will help to establish the total capacity of the Athabasca River system to assimilate municipal and industrial effluent. Two other studies, due for completion shortly, assess alternate treatment technologies for pulp mill effluent, provide an assessment of environmental protection standards specific to the Athabasca River, and examine the past and anticipated future environmental impacts of the pulp and paper industry based along that river system.

Dioxins

An associated matter pertains to dioxins.

The formation of dioxins is one potential impact of pulp mill development that has recently been subject to much attention.

The formation of dioxins is one potential impact of pulp mill development that has recently been subject to much attention. We have already begun a new program to test for dioxins in the river downstream of Alberta's two kraft mills, and in plant effluent and sludges. The technical capability to detect dioxins at ultra-trace levels has only been recently developed. Now that we have this ability, we will be collecting data on ambient levels of dioxin in the environment. Toxicological data is also becoming increasingly available, which will enable us to undertake a risk assessment of the environmental and human health effects of dioxins at levels found in the pulp mill context. Alberta is also actively involved in multi-media standards development for dioxins through federal-provincial committees and workshops. This will help to assess the total exposure of humans to dioxins from all possible sources and, needless to say, we will continue to closely monitor results of dioxin research currently underway in the United States, Europe, and Ontario.

Another water quality issue of particular concern is the use of methoxychlor in the Athabasca River for black fly control.

In my view, we should be able to find a better alternative and therefore I have not approved its use in 1988. We are, however, currently assisting the county of Athabasca and Alberta Agriculture to develop a long-term solution to this problem by examining a range of alternatives. These include on-farm protection of cattle and the experimental use of BTH-14, a biological insecticide that would have less impact on the river than methoxychlor.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, I have attempted this last hour to share my support, my enthusiasm, and my commitment to Alberta's environment. At the same time, I hope I have also given you a reasonable update of Alberta Environment's activities over this last year. The Environment Council of Alberta was created by the provincial government to review the environment conservation policies and programs of government departments and agencies and to inquire into and report to the Minister of Environment on public concerns about Alberta's environment. I feel you are doing that quite well. Alberta's environment is indeed the "home we share."

Environment Week '88 and Environment Awards

For seven days last spring, that message was heard by more than 1.5 million Albertans, and the major contributor in getting that message out to so many people was the Environment Week Association of Alberta. This keen and highly active association has one goal. That is to encourage a co-operative approach to organizing Alberta's annual environment week, usually occurring the last week of May or early June. For the last two years, Alberta Environment has been a major supporter of this excellent and hardworking organization. Indeed, it was during Environment Week '87 that, under our sponsorship, the first annual Alberta environment awards were initiated. It is my intent again this year to support the concept of Environment Week '88, and all that it represents. I would ask that the Environment Council of Alberta and its associated members join me in that support.

You have been a gracious audience, and I thank you for your attention.